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The French Far Right in Russia's Orbit

Nicolas Lebourg

Far-right groups in France are not restricted to the party of the Le Pen family. They are diverse, operate through networks, and are now well within Russia's force field. But this is not only the result of Vladimir Putin's charisma or Marine Le Pen's need for funds. The Russian question has drawn French nationalist activists into combat, both at the rhetorical level—over the promotion of competing geopolitical visions—and at the level of armed combat. These debates are rich, grounded in their organicist thinking and its definition of the relationship between ethnicities and the nation. The wars in the former Yugoslavia and in Ukraine have considerably intensified both the orientation of these groups toward Moscow and the practical aspects of their relationships to the Russian political scene.

In French public forums, everyone is now well aware of the pro-Russian stance of the main national far-right movements, ranging from the writer Alain Soral's small radical anti-Zionist group Égalité et Réconciliation to Front National (FN) deputies. In March 2011, three months after she acceded to her party's presidency at the conference in Tours, Marine Le Pen explicitly acknowledged that she would like to meet Vladimir Putin.¹ A month before the conference in Lyon in 2014, her niece, Marion Maréchal Le Pen—who, like the two other far-right deputies in the legislature, was a member of the France-Russia friendship group in the National Assembly²—said, while competing for the militants' vote against Florian Philippot, then the president's right-hand man, "It's true, I often go to the Russian Embassy. My aunt encourages me to do so."³ The relationship with Russia was seen as a political advantage not only on the national scene, but also within the world of the far right. If Jean-Marie Le Pen made good use of a photograph showing him shaking President Reagan's hand, his daughter had a long meeting with President Putin during her 2017 presidential campaign—and, according to some, met him privately in 2013.⁴ The interview, which took place only after the candidate had failed to arrange one with President-elect Trump, underscores the FN's

1 "Marine Le Pen Veut Aller en Russie," *Le Figaro*, May 2, 2011, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2011/05/02/97001-20110502FILWWW00503-marine-le-pen-veut-allen-russie.php>.

2 "Composition du Groupe d'Amitié France-Russie," Assemblée Nationale, June 20, 2017, http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/instances/fiche/OMC_PO675791.

3 Vincent Jauvert, "Poutine et le FN: Révélation sur les Réseaux Russes des Le Pen," *L'Obs*, November 27, 2014, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/politique/20141024.OBS3131/poutine-et-le-fn-revelations-sur-les-reseaux-russes-des-le-pen.html>.

4 Nicolas Hénin, *La France Russe* (Paris: Fayard, 2016), 147.

penetration of the Russian establishment in recent years: during her father's first visit to Moscow in 1991, he managed only to meet Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskii and an old friend of his who was a member of Pamiat.⁵

Just as Putin was a second choice for Le Pen, so too was Le Pen a second choice for Moscow, which had originally hoped to see pro-Putin conservative candidate François Fillon accede to the French presidency. Late in the campaign, however, polls showed that Fillon was likely to garner just 17% of the vote, while Le Pen stood at 25%,⁶ prompting Putin's apparent endorsement of the FN candidate. Despite being a second choice, moreover, it is not unreasonable that the weight acquired by the far right in France should attract the attention of a state committed to soft power,⁷ particularly since part of the French establishment casts Russia as a bogeyman: when he resigned as prime minister to run for president of the French Republic, Manuel Valls declared that "an alliance between Trump and Putin would be the end of the world."⁸

We commonly read that this taste for Moscow is specific to the era of Marine Le Pen and is one of the factors distinguishing her from her father. It is true that no one took much notice when, in 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen, thrown off balance by his success in the first round of the presidential election, followed by a million-strong demonstration and a second-round disaster, went to Russia and received Russian visitors in his own home.⁹ With the success of the demonstrations against the law on homosexual marriage in 2013, a significant proportion of journalists thought that this newfound preference was due to the standards of morality and virility upheld by Vladimir Putin. Observers found the pro-Russian orientation of the far right profoundly disconcerting because they still held on to a view of Russia skewed by memories of the Cold War and a view of the far right that depended too heavily on memories of the Second World War. In reality, the Putin phenomenon is the embodiment of an historical dynamic: the interest in Russia developed to fill the ideological void left at the end of the Cold War, and in particular as a reaction to the subsequent unipolarity. It is also true that, until about ten years ago, Russophilia was only a marginal affair for the French far right, whereas it has since become general. This is due, among other things, to militant careers during which members of marginal groups have gained access to the Le Pen bandwagon; the wagon itself has become part of the competitive political game.

5 Jauvert, "Poutine et le FN."

6 "Rolling 2017. L'Élection Présidentielle en Temps Réel," IFOP, March 24, 2017, <http://cdn2-new-parismatch.ladmedia.fr/var/ifop/24-03-2017.pdf?version=14aa3f6b>.

7 See the previous paper by Marlène Laruelle: "Russian Soft Power in France: Assessing Moscow's Cultural and Business Para-Diplomacy," Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, January 8, 2018, https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/russian-soft-power-in-france.

8 "Valls: 'Une Alliance entre Trump et Poutine, C'est la Fin du Monde,'" *Valeurs Actuelles*, January 17, 2017, <https://www.valeursactuelles.com/politique/valls-une-alliance-entre-trump-et-poutine-cest-la-fin-du-monde-60842>.

9 "M. Le Pen Reporte sur Sa Fille l'Espoir de Briser l'Isolement du FN," *Le Monde*, April 18, 2003, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2003/04/18/m-le-pen-reporter-sur-sa-fille-l-espoir-de-briser-l-isolement-du-fn_317297_1819218.html.

I) Some pointers to the nationalist Russian organizations and far-right movements in France

Shadows on the Past. The Roots of French far-right Connections to Russia

In terms of numbers, Russian emigration to France after the Bolshevik revolution was tiny: fewer than 100,000 people and just 2% of the foreigners present in mainland France, mostly concentrated around Paris and Nice. Although the communists called for the expulsion of White Russians and the right defended them, there were no real links at that time between Russian and French far-right organizations.¹⁰ However, radical far-right movements existed among White Russians in France from a very early stage. Some were simply enticements designed to extract money from other exiles, such as the phantasmagorical Order of the Russian National Fascist Patriotic Knights (*Ordre des Chevaliers Patriotes Fascistes Nationaux Russes*), founded in Nice in 1930 by the bogus prince Nicolas Stroganoff.¹¹ But in 1927, the French Section of the Union of Associations of Young Russians (*Union des Associations des jeunes Russes*) was founded in Paris to support the accession to the throne of Great Duke Cyril. It represented 300 militants, half based in Paris and half in the south-east, and published two newsletters with a total print run of 7,000 copies. Like the fascist pan-Russian party, it received financial support from German national socialists, who held meetings with White Russians in Paris, but it was no more successful than the others in unifying a markedly fragmented Russian anti-Soviet movement.¹² This fragmentation caused the Vichy regime to consider dissolving all Russian associations in favor of a new single organization structured around a newsletter so anti-Semitic that it would link nationalists in both countries.¹³

This fluidity in the Russian nationalist camp in France corresponded fairly closely to that of the French indigenous far right. The structure of the latter is very distinctive and explains the FN's organization, its ideological drivers, and its geopolitical leanings. Whereas the Italian and German fascist states were formed by mass militias, the French far right was on a smaller scale and was also

10 Ralph Schor, "Les Russes Blancs devant l'Opinion Française (1919-1939)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 48 (1994): 211-224.

11 The French Directorate General for National Security (*Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale* - DGSN) to the prefect for the French Alpes Maritimes Département, "regarding the Order of the Russian National Fascist Patriotic Knights (*A/S de l'Ordre des Chevalliers Fascistes Nationaux Russes*), October 16, 1930, 2p., Archives Nationales/19880206/7.

12 Police Headquarters (*Préfecture de police*), note dated January 1932, 2p; *ibid.*, note dated August 18, 1937; *ibid.*, "regarding the Unification Center for Russian nationalist organizations (*A/S du Centre d'unification des organisations nationalistes russes*), September 1937, 2 p.; *ibid.*, note dated September 18, 1937, AN/19880206/7.

13 French Ministry of the Interior, "regarding the political, moral and material position of stateless Russians (White Russians) in France and in the French Empire," December 5, 1940, 5p, AN/19880206/7.

fragmented. According to estimates by the police services, it accounted for only 5.5% of the active population in 1936; the radicalized right-wing *Croix de Feu*, rather than the fascists, made up 77% of militants. The only fascists counted were Marcel Bucard's *Francistes*, which represented only a tiny proportion (0.5%) of the total.¹⁴ There was therefore no single radical party, but a network of numerically small organizations that cobbled together their ideology from late 19th-century French nationalism with foreign additions. Nor was there a "guiding light": Bucard's *Franciste* party and virtually all the neo-fascist groups after 1945 were based on collective leadership. This unconventional structure requires an analytical approach: we cannot understand group X's position on question A at time T without clarifying the history of the other groups regarding A and the transfers of militants. We cannot understand French nationalists' passion for Donbas unless we know that it dates back to group rivalries in 1999 arising from an ideological quarrel over dogma used by some protagonists to settle personal scores from 1986.

Russian émigré groups remained relatively insignificant after the war. The Labor Solidarity Union (*Union Solidariste du Travail* - NTS) was then the most active of them. It established itself in France via financial aid from Peace and Freedom (*Paix et Liberté*), an anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda organization, as well as via links to the Young Friends of Russia (*Jeunes Amis de la Russie*), led by Boris de Kochkpo and Michel Slavinsky. It had very few active militants but had a core of supporters and received aid from its German counterpart.¹⁵ The NTS was linked to a French far-right group that frequently changed its name, derived from the *Métro-Jeunes* branch of the Secret Army Organization (*Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* - OAS). In 1969, the Young Revolution Movement (*Mouvement Jeune Révolution* - MJR, founded in 1966) and the NTS together launched the Eastern Europe Liberation Front (*Front de Libération de l'Europe de l'Est*). They formed a central Council for European Solidarity with the Italian *Europa Civiltà* and, at the Italians' instigation, took part in the Conference "For World Solidarity" (1971). Together, they published a Bulletin of European Solidarists (1972–1974).¹⁶

The MJR divided repeatedly until what was left, the Solidarity Union (*Union Solidariste*), became part of the Front National in 1977. "When they arrived, there were three of them. Not 300. Not 3000. Just three," Jean-Marie Le Pen said later.¹⁷ Their leader, Jean-Pierre Stirbois, became the FN's second-in-command in 1978, a role he would hold until his accidental death in 1988.

14 Police Headquarters (*Préfecture de police*), "Members of National Groups," May 1936, Police Headquarters Archives /77W4776.

15 Central Directorate of General Intelligence (*Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux* - DCRG), "The Russian Community in France (*La Colonie Russe en France*), *Bulletin confidentiel*, July 1957, p.11-13, AN/F/7/15578.

16 Étienne Verhoeyen, "The Far Right in Belgium (III) (*L'Extrême-Droite en Belgique (III)*)," *Letter in the CRISP*, March 26, 1976, p. 34. By 1969, the MJR had not gained the 300 members it had hoped for, but comprised 150 determined ones (DCRG, "The MJR and Captain Sergeant," *Bulletin confidentiel*, March 1969, p. 5, AN/F/7/15585).

17 Jean-Marie Le Pen, personal interview with the author, July 5, 2012.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to imagine a consistent “solidarist” current close to that of the NTS. In France, the label was used to differentiate a movement from others that were “nationalist” or “neo-fascist”; the term covered a multitude of ideological identifications, from reactionary Catholics to pro-Nazi neo-pagans.

As such, we can see that the FN was formed not, like a typical party, around similar ideas or policies, but rather as a “nationalist compromise” that sought to federate the far-right movements so as to transcend the situation of petty rival groups. At least, this was the goal of the overtly neo-fascist New Order (*Ordre Nouveau* - ON) when it founded the FN in 1972. As a former deputy and a figure in the lawful battle for French Algeria, Jean-Marie Le Pen was elected president in order to put a publicly acceptable face on the movement.

Marine Le Pen’s first geopolitical advisor, and the one who inspired her Russophilia, was Emmanuel Leroy. Leroy began his militant career in the ON and pursued it in the Study & Research Group for European Civilization (*Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne* - GRECE), the flagship movement of Alain de Benoist’s *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right). In 1985, he distanced himself from the GRECE (although he still organized its Summer University in 1986,¹⁸ at a time when the GRECE had an interim management team and was hesitating between metapolitics, militant commitment, and retreat into a spirituality akin to freemasonry)¹⁹ and subscribed to the France-USSR friendship association. He moved from the idea that communism and liberalism were simply two sides of the same coin to the view that new political connections might provide a geopolitical and political counterweight to a Western materialist civilization.²⁰ Jean-Pierre Stirbois made Leroy a paid official of the FN. After he was taken into custody for suspected involvement in the murder of an Algerian national, Bruno Gollnisch, FN regional head, announced to the press that Leroy was resigning from the party. Leroy responded by affirming that the affair was simply a ploy to destabilize the FN.²¹ He was later involved in the bookshop and publishing house Ogmios (from the name of a Gallic god), which re-published, *inter alia*, the works of the collaborationist writer Saint-Loup and was considered close to Iran and Libya by the French intelligence services.²²

In 2007, Leroy took part in a “White Forum” organized in Moscow by Pavel Tualev, a member of the New Right, with Guillaume Faye (formerly of the GRECE, and Leroy’s “sponsor” there)²³ and attended by the Spaniard Enrique Ravello, formerly of CEDADE. However, Leroy distanced himself from the outspoken rhetoric of David Duke (formerly of the Ku Klux Klan).

18 Emmanuel Leroy, personal interview with the author, February 27, 2018.

19 *Le Lien*, internal GRECE letter, 1987-1988.

20 Leroy, interview.

21 *Le Monde*, October 26, 1986; *AFP*, September 29, 1989.

22 DCRG, “The Principal Far-Right Movements in France,” September 17, 1987, p. 8, AN/20030515/1/DP705.

23 Leroy, interview.

Always maintaining a very low profile, he appeared as Marine Le Pen's writer during her conquest of the party and her first presidential campaign—for instance, he co-authored her victory speech when she became NF president. Between 2010 and 2012, Leroy, now presenting himself as a Eurasian militant, advised her on geopolitical and economic issues, in terms of both ideology and agit-prop strategy (in particular advising her to target “the oligarch superclass”). In 2009, Le Pen, who was making her first presidential bid and needed a geopolitical credo, borrowed heavily from one of Leroy's published texts.²⁴ She said: “To rely on Russia today is to create the true European space from the Atlantic to the Urals, a Europe comprising nations pursuing their national interests and linked within a shared civilization, very different from the American ultra-liberal communitarian model toward which the European Union is driving us.”²⁵

Between 2010 and 2017, Leroy also worked on the France/Europe/Russian Alliance (*Alliance France-Europe-Russie* - AFER). Headed by Fabrice Sorlin, an FN candidate in the 2007 parliamentary elections, then-president of the fundamentalist group *Dies Irae*, and current director of the Moscow-based enterprise TSAR, the Alliance was based on the France/Russia Association that Sorlin had founded in 2009. David Mascré was also involved with the AFER and from there briefly became an FN officer before being excluded for illegally recording some party's internal discussions in 2012.²⁶ In 2013, a delegation from the AFER that included Front National sympathizers Bruno Gollnisch and Aymeric Chauprade as well as various National Catholics was received in Moscow at an international forum on traditional values. The AFER has had contact with the Russian establishment in France—the honorary consul in Biarritz attended one of its meetings—but most importantly, it has helped to influence the geopolitical line taken by French far-right groups.²⁷

What were the original positions and relationships in this milieu? The many foreign delegations at the ON's first meeting in 1970 included “Dr Okolovitch on...an unspecified Russian anti-communist league” (we may well assume that this was Dr George Okolovich, head of the NTS).²⁸ The links developed thus appear important, but at least for the Croatian and German delegations, we have information showing that the invitations were simply a bluff intended to influence French opinion.²⁹ As such, if there was a link with Russia, it was probably a very tenuous

24 The text went through several versions. See “Le Sarkozysme Est Mort! Vive Le Solidarisme!,” *Blog de Stéphane Poncet: Front National de Villeurbanne*, April 2, 2010, <http://fnvilleurbanne.over-blog.com/article-le-sarkozysme-est-mort-vive-le-solidarisme-47862203.html>. See also Abel Mestre and Caroline Monnot, *Le Système Le Pen* (Paris: Denoël, 2012), 53-58 and 112-120.

25 Marine Le Pen, *Pour Que Vive la France* (Paris: Grancher, 2012), 225.

26 See the minutes of one of its first meetings: “Retour sur le Dîner de l’Alliance France-Europe-Russie...,” *Terre & Peuple Provence (blog)*, March 27, 2010, <https://tpprovince.wordpress.com/2010/03/27/retour-sur-le-diner-de-lalliance-france-europe-russie/>.

27 Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (London: Routledge, 2017), 189-195.

28 Telex from the DCRG to the Border Police (*Police Aux Frontières* - PAF), February 17, 1970, AN/20080389/16.

29 RGPP, note dated February 20, 1970, AN/20080389/16.

one. Notably, at the ON's founding congress, the first motion tabled was one of foreign policy. It was defended by François Duprat, a consistent pro-American who had already indicated that he had mixed views of the NTS,³⁰ and his vision scarcely extended beyond Western Europe.³¹

In the FN, the neo-Nazis were initially grouped with the neo-fascists close to Duprat (whose weekly journal also had a Belgian version produced by a team led by a White Russian).³² It was only in 1994 that they built a structure within and outside the FN: the association Land and People (*Terre et Peuple* - TP), headed by Pierre Vial, the former leader of the GRECE. A key FN officer during the 1990s, he said at the time that he had been converted from a simple nationalist by talking with Saint-Loup while imprisoned for his activities over French Algeria.³³ Saint-Loup (the pen name of the writer Marc Augier) was one of the best-known apostles of European Nationalism in its ethno-regionalist form, and was close to the GRECE in the 1970s. A militant socialist before the war, he changed his allegiance in August 1940. With funding from the Third Reich, he and others ran a small group that, even though its name changed several times, was one of the very few French organizations to refer explicitly to the German regime. The group campaigned for an alliance between France, Italy, Germany, and Russia "to form an indissoluble bloc that could impose its will on other European nations."³⁴

Augier later led the Youth of the new Europe (*Jeunes de l'Europe Nouvelle* – JEN),³⁵ an offshoot of the Collaboration Group. Its full name was "Collaborative Organization of French Dynamism for Continental Unity," wording which probably influenced the name, *Unité Continentale*, of a group of French volunteers in Donbas. In 1941, he joined the Legion of French Volunteers against Bolshevism (*Légion des Volontaires Français contre le bolchevisme* - LVF), a move that allowed him, over the next few decades, to depict the Europeanization of the Waffen-SS as the founding act of the Nation of Europe. One of the LVF officers was Pierre Clémenti (né François Clémenti), Pierre Vial's godfather, who in 1934 had founded the French National Communist Party (*Parti Français National-Communiste*). Sentenced to death in absentia in 1948, he fled to Germany and Italy and then published a book from Switzerland arguing for a single state composed of Germany, Italy, and France, supported by a USSR that would move away from

30 François Duprat, "A New State Political Directorate: The NST [sic], Soviet Secret Police," *Défense de l'Occident* (February 1968): 47-54.

31 RGPP, note dated May 15, 1970, 7 p.: AN/20080389/47.

32 Email from Manuel Abramowicz, in charge of the Belgian Far Right Observatory (*Observatoire belge de l'extrême droite*), December 20, 2010, <http://www.resistances.be>.

33 "He made a pagan of me—that is, someone who knows that the only real question for the last two thousand years has been to know whether one belongs, mentally, to the forest people or to that tribe of goat-herders in its desert that proclaimed itself to be the chosen people of a strange god (...). Yes, I am one of those who has discovered the eternal sign of all life, the ever-turning wheel of the Sol Invictus"—Pierre Vial, "Saint-Loup, the Man of the *Grand Midi*," 1991. Republished at "Saint-Loup, L'Homme du Grand Midi," *Terre & Peuple*, May 17, 2008, <https://www.terreetpeuple.com/564-non-categorise/329-saint-loup-l-homme-du-grand-midi.html>.

34 DRG, May 4, 1943, 2p, AN/F/7/15301.

35 JEN's newsletter also uses the "life rune" as its logotype, as did the American National Alliance later.

Marxism in favor of national socialism. He attributed the change in his view of the USSR to the time he had spent on the Eastern Front, where he discovered “that magnificent [Russian] people, healthy, friendly and good.”³⁶

Clémenti was, for a time, one of the most powerful men in the New European Order (*Nouvel Ordre Européen* - NOE), a neo-Nazi international association founded in 1953 by the ex-Trotskyite-turned-Waffen-SS-member René Binet. The formula³⁷ referring to the defense and construction of a Europe “from Brest to Vladivostok,” which later became a catchphrase for European nationalists and was even used by members of the Le Pen family, appeared in Binet’s magazine. Within the NOE, Clémenti was set against the Belgian former member of the Waffen-SS Jean-Robert Debbaudt, who edited the bulletin *L’Europe réelle*, distributed both in his country and in France. To counter Jewish domination of Europe, which would ensure its destruction by immigration, *L’Europe réelle* called for friendly relations with Russia and Colonel Gaddafi’s Libya.³⁸ It is worth noting in passing that the final statement adopted by the official Eurasian colloquium held in Moldova in 2017³⁹ referred to “the real Europe,” a formula from this bulletin now firmly embedded in the Western European radical far right.

European Action was reanimated in Switzerland in 2010 and taken on by *Terre et Peuple* (with its Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese sections). Pierre Vial, who at the end of the 1960s edited the bulletin *Socialisme européen*, which advocated “national communism,” thus closed the loop. He seemed, however, to remain much more committed to TP. Nevertheless, despite the play of conceptual ambiguities surrounding birthplace and blood, these networks cannot simply be labeled neo-Nazi. Drawing on its *völkisch* leanings inspired by the Wandervogel, TP was able to construct a racist line of argument that resolved the dispute between partisans of a Europe of nations and those of a Europe of regions, based on a formula by Pierre Vial that appropriated a phrase of Maurras: “everything that has to do with identity is ours.” The organization has produced several key figures on the electoral far right, including Sophie Montel, who was elected as an FN European deputy but is now vice-president of Florian Philippot’s movement *Les Patriotes*. TP also influenced the ideas of *Les Identitaires* (The “Identitarians”), although these ideas had no influence on the signifiers associated with Nazism.

Finally, it contributed to the Islamophobic shift in French far-right movements, which dates back to before September 11, 2001: it was during the 1999 war in Kosovo that French far-right movements, and then right-wing and military circles, began to adopt the idea of Islamism as a tool of a U.S. plot to ensure American domination. It is essential to grasp this vision of Islamism as a

36 Pierre Clémenti, *La Troisième paix* (Fribourg: Ed. de la Jeune Europe, 1949), 54.

37 *Le Nouveau Prométhée* (October 1950).

38 *L’Europe réelle* (May 1976).

39 “Manifeste de Chişinău ‘Réaliser la Grande Europe,’” Flux, December 28, 2017, <http://flux.md/stiri/manifeste-de-chisinau-realiser-la-grande-europe#>.

product of U.S. unipolarity to understand the French far-right attraction for Russia, which was, from that point on, seen as the only power capable of offering a rampart against both unipolar globalization under American domination and Islamism.⁴⁰

Reorganization

Russia occupies an important place in the French far-right vision as the world's bulwark against the western English-speaking imperium. Emmanuel Leroy wrote in a text dated 2016 that since 1580, "the ideology of English speakers" had been aiming at supremacy via world governance and that the Islamist terrorist networks and conflicts in the Middle East were instruments of (and stages in) this Anglo-American conquest. Russia, by virtue of its land-based values and its status as the Third Rome, is considered to have the qualities (and the duty) to lead a global patriotic insurrection against globalization and post-modernism.⁴¹ In the view of Christian Bouchet—formerly of the *Réseau Radical* (Radical Network), an important revolutionary nationalist, an FN officer between 2008 and 2015, and the French publisher of Aleksandr Dugin's writings—geopolitical projects should be seen as Russian dolls: "Eurasia would be the natural evolution from a successful European federation, the stage after the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis. But it is also—and we should keep this to ourselves—an essential component of our esotericism: the Third Rome, the union of the East and the West, and so on."⁴²

The analyses and causalities are as diverse as the trends in the French far right—for instance, *Rivarol*, the weekly founded by former Vichy supporters after the war, contends that events in Syria have been engineered jointly by Israel and America⁴³—but the root idea remains: Russia represents the power able to oppose the "modern world." The question is broadly linked to sympathy for Shiite countries and states: Leroy thinks that it is the Muslim brotherhood and the Wahhabis who should be expelled from France⁴⁴; Alain Soral steadfastly supports the Iranian and Syrian regimes. Aymeric Chauprade (*Action Française*, then FN), in the August 2014 manifesto that contributed to his break with Marine Le Pen, wrote that "there is only one real enemy: Sunni Islamic fundamentalism." He went so far as to advocate support for Israel, provoking the wrath of radicals close to the FN president, such as Philippe Péninque.⁴⁵

40 For a short history of this issue, see Nicolas Lebourg, "Islamophobia in France," *Occasion* 9 (December 2015): 1-9, <https://arcade.stanford.edu/occasion/islamophobia-france>.

41 Emmanuel Leroy, "Étiologie du Terrorisme," *Le Saker Francophone* (blog), February 12, 2016, <http://lesakerfrancophone.fr/etiologie-du-terrorisme>

42 Radical Network, "Cahiers de Formation – Ecole des Cadres Jean Thiriart," September 2004 (internal document).

43 *Rivarol*, February 28, 2018: *ibid.*, March 7, 2018.

44 "Lettre Ouverte à Marine Le Pen," *L'Echelle de Jacob*, August 23, 2016, <http://echelledejacob.blogspot.fr/2016/08/lettre-ouverte-marine-le-pen.html>.

45 Abel Mestre and Caroline Monnot, "Les Réseaux du Front National," in Sylvain Crépon, Alexandre Dézé, and

Within the FN, managing the nationalist compromise is no longer a burning issue. The system shattered in 1998–1999, when the FN split in such a way that the party lost key members of its elite and militants. The Le Pen clan withdrew and regrouped, and since then, its primary requirement has been personal loyalty. After her election to the FN presidency in 2011, Marine Le Pen privatized relationships with figures from radical movements. These individuals were not card-carrying members of the FN and ran not subgroups but service-provider businesses, so that the party could claim it was not linked to radical elements. This applied, in particular, to former members of the *Groupe Union Défense* (GUD), a small group behind the creation of the ON. They included Philippe Péninque, a tax advisor heavily involved in the transnational finance networks of former GUD members (*gudards*), who had his own links in Russia. In January 2012, he went to Russia to try to organize a visit by Marine Le Pen as part of the presidential campaign.⁴⁶ The GUD has been through various epochs and chains of command, but the *gudards* were close to Marine Le Pen at the time of the movement's radical anti-Zionist period, when it considered that France, like Palestine, was the victim of a Zionist occupation. (At that time, they were headed by Frédéric Chatillon from Ogmios, who had been heavily involved in FN campaigns since 2011.) Despite being prosecuted in relation to financial affairs, the *gudards* played a decisive role in organizing Le Pen's 2017 presidential campaign.⁴⁷

The radical anti-Zionist movement restructured to be more autonomous from the NF, with a pro-Kremlin geopolitical axis. Alain Soral, prominent in the French radical far right, reworked Duprat's idea of Zionism as a driver for global transnationalization, and was blasted publicly by the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, in 2016, a time when opposition to the polemicist appeared to be dying down. However, Jewish associations were profoundly disturbed by his viral influence: Soral's lawyer even wrote to Putin to ask him not to follow injunctions requiring that Soral, as an agitator, no longer be received by the pro-Russian media.⁴⁸ A decade earlier, Marine Le Pen's partner, Louis Aliot, had publicized Soral's membership of the FN to show that the party could attract an intellectual presented as a "Marxist." In 2007, with the help of Philippe Péninque, Soral launched the association Equality and Reconciliation (*Égalité et Réconciliation*), which sought to recruit candidates based on ethnicity or confession so as to supply the FN with an ethnically diverse elite in order to help normalize a party that now hoped to be seen as obedient to the *république*.⁴⁹ But when

Nonna Mayer, eds., *Les Faux-Semblants du Front National. Sociologie d'un Parti Politique* (Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015), 66.

46 Mathias Destal and Marine Turchi, "*Marine est au Courant de Tout*" (Paris: Flammarion, 2017), 171.

47 "FN: Les Révélations d'un Insider," *Mediapart*, January 14, 2018,

<https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/140118/fn-les-revelations-dun-insider>.

48 Pierre-Alain Dupauw, "Lettre à Vladimir Poutine à Propos du CRIF et d'Alain Soral (Damien Viguière)," *Media-Presses.info*, January 25, 2016, <http://www.medias-presse.info/lettre-a-vladimir-poutine-a-propos-du-crif-et-dalain-soral-damien-viguiere/47996/>.

49 Mestre and Monnot, *Le Système Le Pen*, 84–87.

he was refused a leading place on the party list for the European elections in 2009, Soral abruptly left the FN and successfully developed his own movement, while supporting Florian Philippot within the FN. One of his first initiatives was to organize a demonstration in support of Vladimir Putin during his visit to Paris with the Russian embassy and the France-Russia Collective (*Collectif France-Russie*) led by André Chanclu, a former ON activist, and by Thierry Bouzard, a former militant in the French section of the NOE and a former FN officer who is now active in promoting Civitas, a fundamentalist Catholic movement.⁵⁰

Égalité et Réconciliation had to find a political niche and hope for financial spin-offs to aid its new autonomy. Choosing to be pro-Russian was not simply a matter of affinities but also corresponded to issues internal to the French far right. Moreover, some of the actors were conducting business between France and Russia and could thus combine their geopolitical convictions and their private sector role. The difficulty was to reach the critical level of effectiveness necessary to interest a major state—witness the importance the Russian authorities give to the FN or to opinion makers. Soral's very successful online videos have clearly raised his profile: in 2012, he was invited to Russia by Civic Control, an official NGO, to participate in observing the 2012 presidential elections, at which time he was also offered a long interview on the television channel Russia Today.⁵¹

In these videos, Soral depicts Russia as Eurasia's champion, under attack by "American Zionists." For example, in his broadcast of January 11, 2015 (which garnered more than 485,000 views on the main platform, dailymotion, alone), he considered that the Ukrainian crisis had been fomented by the CIA, as had the events of May 1968 in France.⁵² In 2011, he contended that only Russia had prevented the attack on Iran and Syria. "Putin was elected by settled producers, and who hates him? The nomad predators," he rasped in a 2012 video, while during a conference a year later he maintained before members of the *Action Française* that France's sovereignty could exist only in a multipolar world, a world that could be engineered only by the Russian president.⁵³ His pro-Russian stance might thus be interpreted in several ways, suitable for different types of audiences.

Soral's influence was not restricted to his own movement, but extended also to *La Dissidence Française*, a small group founded in 2011 with a charter that manifestly borrows from

50 Abel Mestre and Caroline Monnot, "Alain Soral et Son Association Font les Yeux Doux à Poutine," *Le Monde (blog)*, November 26, 2009, <http://droites-extremes.blog.lemonde.fr/2009/11/26/alain-soral-et-son-association-font-les-yeux-doux-a-poutine/>; "Qui est Thierry Bouzard, le Monsieur Anti-IVG de Civitas?," *Le Horde*, March 3, 2017, <http://lahorde.samizdat.net/2017/03/03/qui-est-thierry-bouzard-le-monsieur-anti-ivg-de-civitas/>.

51 Robin d'Angelo and Mathieu Molard, "Exclu: Les Documents Qui Rhabillent Soral Pour l'Hiver," *Streetpress*, January 18, 2016, <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1453121203-exclu-documents-soral-leaks>.

52 "Soral Répond! – Émission du 11 janvier 2015," Daily Motion video, 1:46:41, posted by "ERTV," January 11, 2015, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/kF8z0pnOhQP5PB9Xqxd>.

53 Quoted in Aurélien Montagner, "L'Idéologie d'Alain Soral: Entre Novation et Récupération, Étude d'une Composante Singulière de l'Extrême-Droite Française Contemporaine" (MA thesis, Bordeaux University, 2014), 44-45.

Evola, Dugin and Schmitt: “Against the thalassocratic forces darkening the world, against the international organization of Dealers aiming to replace ‘to be’ with ‘to have’ and loyal to the idea of the Imperium, the *Dissidence Française* promotes the idea of continental resistance, in terms both of geopolitics and civilization, and is aligned with the Eurasianist approach.”⁵⁴

Whereas he had until then debated with Dugin outside Russia (in France in 2011, Spain in 2013, and Brazil in 2014), in 2016 Soral was invited to participate in the forum “The New Era of Journalism: Farewell to Mainstream,” organized by the press agency Russia Today (Rossiia Segodnia—dissociated from the channel of the same name). He thanked the Russian state several times for this official invitation. On the same trip, he gave a lecture at the Dostoevsky library in Moscow, leading to an official protest by the Jewish representative council in France (*Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France* - CRIF) to the Russian ambassador in Paris.⁵⁵ After these and other allegations prompted Facebook to shut down the pages of Alain Soral and *Égalité et Réconciliation* in 2017, Aleksandr Dugin wrote Soral a message of support.⁵⁶

Ultimately, the questions of Russian structures in France and the heritage of the White Russians are ongoing. Active members of the Coordination Committee for the Forum of Russians in France (*Le Comité de Coordination du Forum des Russes de France* - CCFRF) include for instance Prince Alexandre Troubetskoi, a White Russian close to the French Popular Right (*Droite populaire*), a pro-Russian and anti-immigration group within the classic right party *Les Républicains*. The Institute for Democracy and Cooperation (IDC), a think tank financed by Russian businesses and in which Emmanuel Leroy’s wife is involved, was created in Paris in 2008.⁵⁷ The IDC generally prefers to work with the right rather than the far right: it is directed by Natalia Narochnitskaia, former Rodina deputy in the Duma, and close to Dimitri Rogozin, who as Russian deputy prime minister received Marine Le Pen in Moscow in June 2013.⁵⁸ The FN president’s trip was organized by Leroy⁵⁹ and began in Crimea (not annexed at that time), with a seminar combining economics and politics. She was also received by Sergei Naryshkin, the

54 “La Charte de la Dissidence Française,” *La Dissidence (blog)*, March 2014, https://dissidenceresistance.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/charte_dissidence_francaise3.pdf. We note that the 2018 manifesto does not mention Eurasia: “Révolution Conservatrice: Le Programme de la Dissidence Française,” *Dissidence Française*, January 2018, <https://dissidenceresistance.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/df-pgm-final.pdf>. The group’s logotype is a spearhead, thus continuing the graphical theme of the European Assembly for Freedom (*Rassemblement Européen de la Liberté*) and the French Nationalist Party (*Parti Nationaliste Français*).

55 Isabelle Mandraud, “A Moscou, Alain Soral Vante le « Modèle Poutine,” *Le Monde*, June 11, 2016, www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2016/06/11/a-moscou-alain-soral-vante-le-modele-poutine_4948293_3210.html.

56 Alexandr Dugin, tweet, January 23, 2018, https://twitter.com/A_G_Dugin/status/955792222041014272.

57 Gaidz Minassian, “Les Réseaux Français de Poutine: Une Intelligentsia Hétéroclite,” *Le Monde*, November 18, 2014, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/international/article/2014/11/18/les-reseaux-francais-de-poutine-une-intelligentsia-heteroclite_4525583_3210.html?xtmc=emmanuel_leroy&xtcr=3.

58 On the CCFRF and the IDC, see Laruelle, “Russian Soft Power in France.”

59 Leroy, interview.

president of the Duma, and by Alexei Pushkov, who led its Committee of International Affairs.⁶⁰

Thus, the interconnections between French far-right groups and Russian circles cannot be reduced to bilateral relationships, as they in fact cover a set of interpenetrating and partially transnational networks and loose conglomerates. Nor can they be attributed solely to the charisma of Vladimir Putin, as they result from dynamics particular to French nationalists.

II) Changes in European nationalism

From Rosenberg to Yockey

In 2017, Emmanuel Leroy published an article about the split of the European far-right (he names it the Continental Identitarian movement) over the Ukrainian question. He stressed that the preference either for Ukraine or for Russia hinged, in fact, on the choices made in Western European nationalists' debates on the form of Europe decades earlier. Kyiv partisans were those in favor of "*Europe aux cent drapeaux*" (Europe of a hundred flags), an expression coined by the former Breton collaborator Yann Fouéré, and "*patries charnelles*" (carnal homelands), the expression hammered out by Saint-Loup). Partisans of Moscow, meanwhile, supported Eurasian unity against the Occident, echoing doctrinaires like Thiriart in the West and Dugin in the East.⁶¹ This observation is an important one: we cannot understand the positioning of far-right groups toward Russia without locating the earlier debates that socialized far-right actors politically.

The most committed French collaborators did not necessarily take the racialist line of Alfred Rosenberg, who saw Slavs as inferior. These radicals moved on from French nationalism to what they called "European nationalism," an expression that persisted after the war as the movement's name. Nevertheless, not all partisans of European nationalism thought that Slavs should be included in Europe. Maurice Bardèche, the most influential intellectual on the French far right between 1948 and 1968, presented the Soviet Union and communism as "Slavo-Asian" realities external to Europe.⁶² Nevertheless, Bardèche was in contact with the American Francis Parker Yockey; it was even thought that he might become the French representative for Yockey's European Liberation Front.⁶³ But Yockey's view of the USSR as a neo-fascist ally that was the only force capable of

60 Laura Motet, "Visites, Financement: Le Front National et la Russie, une Idylle Qui Dure," *Le Monde*, November 18, 2016, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2016/11/18/le-front-national-et-la-russie-une-idylle-qui-dure_5033857_4355770.html.

61 Emmanuel Leroy, "Kiev ou Moscou?" *Europe Maxima*, October 8, 2017, <http://www.europemaxima.com/kiev-ou-moscou-par-emmanuel-leroy/>.

62 Maurice Bardèche, *L'Œuf de Christophe Colomb. Lettre à un Sénateur d'Amérique* (Paris: Les Sept couleurs, 1951), 145.

63 Secretariat of the President of the Republic, "Activité de M. Maurice Bardèche," March 28, 1951, AN/4AG67.

breaking Judeo-Israeli control of the West—although it spread rapidly among American neo-Nazis, especially from 1953 in the National Renaissance Party—was very little known in France.⁶⁴ A few texts were translated during the 1970s, but these were shot down by the most important figures in the milieu: the idea of choosing the USSR for anti-Semitic reasons was condemned by Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, the revolutionary nationalists' (*Nationaliste-Révolutionnaire* - NR) leader as manipulation by the Soviet secret services, an “aberrant racist view,” and a “pitiable line of reasoning.” Bardèche fought back, jeering at “smoke and mirrors that convinces only those who mistake appearance for reality and confuse toeing the line with a moral code.”⁶⁵

Yockey's name reappeared in the melting pot of the radical fringes among those seeking common ground between the GRECE-influenced *Nouvelle Droite*, revolutionary nationalism, and Thiriart's national communitarianism. The GRECE—in particular Guillaume Faye, Robert Steuckers, and Pierre Vial—was at that time moving closer to the NR members of the *Troisième Voie* (Third Way - TW). In the 1980s, this was particularly true of the review *Le Partisan européen* (with Guillaume Faye, Thierry Mudry, and Robert Steuckers) and the small group operating around the French Mediterranean basin to promote the Europe of “carnal homelands.” Their stated objective was to constitute a common European front, including members of the New Right, disciples of Thiriart, neo-fascists like the NR, the anti-Zionist far left, and in particular the infra-margin of the negationist far left, as well as disciples of Noam Chomsky. The choice was unequivocally against the United States and for Russia, but was differentiated from a pro-Soviet stance by presenting it as a necessary stage in Europe's reunification.⁶⁶ Anti-Americanism was the group's guiding principle, not only drawing on Thiriart, but also re-establishing Francis Parker Yockey as one of the references for the French far right.⁶⁷

The eristic semantics of the Belgian theoretician Jean Thiriart were reused; for the first time in twenty years, he participated in several public meetings, including one in Marseille co-organized by *Le Partisan européen* and *Conscience européenne*, the review of the Communitarian National European Party (*Parti Communautaire National-européen* - PCN), which was founded by his disciples in 1984. Luc Michel and Yannick Sauveur, intellectuals from the PCN, also spoke. The speakers clearly indicated where they differed from the audience: they rejected the GRECE's metapolitics in favor of intellectuals who drove things forward and they favored the integration of Siberia, Iraq, Turkey, and Central Asia into Europe. On the other hand, they recognized a general

64 Kevin Coogan, “Lost Imperium: The European Liberation Front (1949-54),” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 3 (July 2002): 9-23; Jeffrey Kaplan, “The Post-War Paths of Occult National Socialism: From Rockwell and Madole to Manson,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 35, no. 3 (2001): 49; Francis Parker Yockey, *Le Prophète de l'Imperium* (Paris: Avatar, 2004); Francis Parker Yockey, *Le Monde en Flammes* (Paris: Avatar, 2004).

65 *Jeune Nation solidariste*, October 26, 1978; *ibid.*, October 9, 1980.

66 *Principes d'action du partisan européen*, 4 p.

67 *Le Partisan européen* 1 (1989) (sic).

convergence on European unity and on the construction of a European/Arab axis to counter the American/Zionist axis.⁶⁸ Such stances naturally call to mind neo-Eurasianism, but the PCN couched its language in such a way as to reflect an entirely standard radical anti-Zionism, implying a pro-Soviet choice with thinking closer to Yockey than to the euro-communist left: Zionism was a world reality that had taken control of American imperialism and was seeking to provoke war in Europe against the USSR, as it had done against Germany in 1939.⁶⁹

These ideas formed part of the debate, but remained within the higher echelons. Indeed, it was not until 2004 that French-speaking readers could access a substantial version of Yockey's writings. Those expressing opinions closest to Yockey were those influenced by American neo-Nazism, especially those peripheral to the World Union of National-Socialists (WUNS), for instance the former Waffen-SS Frenchman Robert Dun (né Maurice Martin). In the magazine of the National Socialist Proletarian Party (*Parti Prolétarien National-Socialiste*), he praised the "Russo-Aryan" USSR and affirmed that he wanted a "federation of ethnic nations" opening the way to an "Aryan world state";⁷⁰ in other texts, he proclaimed the USSR to be one of the last ramparts of the Aryan race against racial mixing.⁷¹ Although totally unknown to the general public, he has influenced racist thinking in the *Nouvelle Droite*, including the current magazine *Réfléchir & Agir* (Reflect and Act), for which David Rachline, the FN senator and mayor who directed Marine Le Pen's presidential campaign in 2017, was interviewed last autumn.

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However, although there were former WUNS members among its founders,⁷² the GRECE's swing toward Sovietophilia was not based on WUNS' arguments. Its school of thought originally pursued an ideology of bringing the white world together, then developed into a critique of liberalism and the notion of the West, and, above all, a denunciation of the United States as the facilitator of globalization. The interest in Russia was not initially evident, as a result of an anti-Soviet reflex. One of the first in the movement to change direction was Jean Parvulesco—and it is probably no coincidence that he was a Romanian, rather than French, citizen. After the war, there were about one hundred former members of the Iron Guard in France, who were generally hostile to Horia Sima. The League of Free Romanians, founded in the US in 1949, had no legal existence, but was

68 *La lettre du Partisan européen* (Thermidor, 1987) (internal document).

69 *Conscience européenne* 7 (April 1984).

70 *Le Viking*, January 1964.

71 Robert Dun, *Les Catacombes de la Libre Pensée* (2004), 15.

72 Transcript of the hearing of Daniel-Louis Burdeyron, July 29, 1964, AN/19880206/15; DCRG, "Les Groupes de Recherches et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne," July 1970, *Bulletin mensuel confidentiel Documentation-Orientation* 160, 5 p., AN/F/7/15585; Stéphane François, "L'Extrême Droite "Folkiste" et l'Antisémitisme," *Le Banquet* 24 (2007), 207.

represented in France by Georges Raut, also president of the *Association des Roumains Réfugiés* in France. The Trade-Union Center for Refugee Democrat Romanian Journalists and Publicists (*Centre syndical des journalistes et publicistes roumains démocrates réfugiés*) (around thirty members) was founded in 1950, with Jean Parvulesco as its General Secretary.⁷³ Parvulesco, who was later close to the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* (OAS), then to the GRECE, and lastly to its splinter group *Synergies Européennes*, was claimed as an inspiration by the neo-Eurasianist Aleksandr Dugin, as was made clear in the official tributes paid to him last year in Moldova.

Parvulesco was one of the first authors to introduce Mackinder into the French nationalist movement, in a revue he ran with Yves Bataille (who introduced to post-1968 France the “anti-imperialist” arguments of the German NRs, and during the war in the ex-Yugoslavia those of Serbian nationalists who opposed the establishment of an “Islamic Republic in Europe”). Parvulesco took up Mackinder’s ideas about the geographical “heartland” and Julius Evola’s thoughts on the cyclical nature of time. He asserted that Stalin’s politics had aimed at “continental Eurasian unity,” which was the hidden goal of the “world revolution at the center of the earth” and the same goal as that of polar ancestors pursuing the Heartland in times gone by at the end of the “last hidden cycle.” According to him, Eurasia would become the place where the dialectic of the United States confronted that of the USSR, resulting ultimately in “all being taken up toward a unified civilization [within] one community with the same civilization, of being and of destiny.”⁷⁴

This is a restatement, in geopolitical and esoteric terms, of the views of European nationalists of the white world, and prefigures turn-of-the-century theories on the new Eurasian/American alliance of the so-called “Septentrion.” Opposition to American imperialism made Parvulesco assert that it would be the USSR that saved the white race,⁷⁵ and the Eurasianist dimension of his argument became stronger once the USSR was dismantled: he advocated “the empire of greater Europe and Eurasia” uniting “western and eastern Europe, Russia and Greater Siberia, India and Japan,” espousing the idea from 19th-century Indophilia that India would allow the Europeans to reconnect with their Septentrional polar origins.⁷⁶ He greeted Putin’s rise to power with the same mysticism, describing the Russian president as “an earthly representation of Christ Pantocrator” preparing for the coming of the “Eurasian Empire at the Finish.”⁷⁷

Whereas the thinking of French far-right movements was blinkered by the Cold War, Parvulesco reinstated the idea of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, a century-old subject of French diplomatic thought. As the translator of Yockey’s first texts, he thus went against the dogma of the French Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (*Mouvement Nationaliste-Révolutionnaire* - MNR) to

73 DCRG, “La Colonie Roumaine en France,” *Bulletin confidentiel* (December 1960), 33 p., AN/F/7/15580.

74 *De l’Atlantique au Pacifique*, February 1976.

75 *Jeune Nation Solidariste*, March 15, 1979.

76 Stéphane François, “Les Paganismes de la Nouvelle Droite (1980-2004)” (PhD diss., University of Lille, 2005), 146.

77 Jean Parvulesco, *Vladimir Poutine et l’Eurasie* (Charmes: Les Amis de la Culture Européenne, 2005), 227 and 433.

which he belonged. According to the MNR, Europe would be turned into a colony due to a secret understanding between its Russian and American occupiers. He asserted that the enemy was a Washington-Tel-Aviv-Beijing axis that would try to kidnap the “Heartland,” and contended that to counter it, the “potential axis” of Paris-Berlin-Moscow should be brought into play.⁷⁸

Arguing for this axis allows sovereignists today to escape the “isolationist” label: for instance, in 2000, Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, leftist sovereignist candidate during the 2002 presidential election, invoked it as a response to American unilateralism.⁷⁹ The topic was subsequently useful in revitalizing a pro-Russia stance, placing it in a context that gave the impression of being neither anti-European nor in thrall to Moscow. Thus, during the 2012 presidential elections, Marine Le Pen defended a “pan-European Union of sovereign states including Russia and Switzerland”; her 2017 program took sections from the old one, adding the words “proposal to Germany to work together for a trilateral *Paris-Berlin-Moscow alliance*.” A Paris-Berlin-Moscow Association was also founded in 2003. It was non-aligned politically, and its Committee of Patrons included a representative from each country: Henri de Grossouvre (France, director for public entities at Veolia, the main French holding for public utility services); Klaus Mangold (Germany, vice-president of Rothschild Europe); and Alexander Zviangintsev (Russia, vice-president of the International Association of Prosecutors). De Grossouvre was friendly with Dominique Venner, an historic figure in European nationalism and the *Nouvelle Droite*, and was present at the funeral after Venner’s suicide in the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. De Grossouvre himself contests the suicide of his father, François Mitterrand’s ambiguous advisor, in the Élysée Palace in 1994.⁸⁰

The enduring link made by Parvulesco between eschatological mysticism and a prophecy of ethno-political palingenesis has interested others outside France. In 2017, an international colloquium on his work was held in Moldova, with the blessing of the Orthodox authorities.⁸¹ For Emmanuel Leroy, Moldova is at the frontier, a good place to respond to Parvulesco’s idea of defining a world “of the Urals and of Uranus, a place of convergences.”⁸² But on the other hand, in a country as secular, skeptical, and a-religious as France, Parvulesco’s prose is nothing more than marginal, and can influence only a limited number—although this is not necessarily a failure, given the author’s esoteric and elitist viewpoint. Parvulesco trafficked in the international ideas of the

78 *Jeune Nation Solidariste*, March 1, 1979.

79 See Jean Pierre Chevenement, colloquium of the Mouvement des Citoyens (MDC) “Mondialisation Libérale, Europe, Etats-Nations,” May 21, 2000, Paris, France, <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/003001692.html>.

80 His duties for the presidency of the Republic did not prevent him maintaining his friendship with Jacques Leray, a former member of the Waffen-SS and head of the JEN when Augier was at the front (according to RGPP, dossier on Jacques Leray, APP/GAL2/317.355).

81 See “Jean Parvulesco et la Géopolitique Transcendantale,” *Parousia (blog)*, September 21, 2017, <http://parousia-parousia.blogspot.fr/2017/09/jean-parvulesco-et-la-geopolitique.html>.

82 Leroy, interview.

marginal; his legacy is a name that has become a password to a very restricted line of thought, but one that contributes to transnational political symbolism. This neo-Eurasianist rendezvous at Chisinau appears to be a fixture, with a new international conference at the end of 2017 on the topic “Alternatives to Financial Capitalism for the 21st Century,” again organized with the support of the country’s president Igor Dodon. The fact that the Moldovan president himself opened the conference and spoke of the necessity of a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis aroused the enthusiasm of *Égalité et Réconciliation*, which on that occasion also offered French-language articles to the Donbass Press Agency.⁸³

Alongside the French attendees, two authors linked to *Égalité et Réconciliation*, Lucien Cerise and Marion Sigaut, were among the general public. The speakers included Valérie Bugault, formerly of the *Union Populaire Républicaine*, an ultra-sovereignist group, but now close to Civitas; Emmanuel Leroy, who not only co-organized the meetings, but also spoke as a former member of the GRECE in the name of the *Cercle Jean Parvulesco*; Hervé Juvin; and Ivan Blot.⁸⁴ Hervé Juvin is close to *Les Identitaires* and a columnist for both *Éléments* (GRECE’s magazine) and TVLibertés, an online television channel close to the *Nouvelle Droite*. He also writes for Aymeric Chauprade’s site. Since the beginning of 2018, he has been vice-president of a new pro-Russian think tank, Géopragma, one of whose members is ex-General Pinatel.⁸⁵ For his part, Ivan Blot is a former member of the GRECE, and co-founded the famous and influential *Club de l’Horloge* in 1974. As an FN officer he condemned the “genocide of the white race” fomented by cosmopolitans. He has tried to align with the more classic right and in 2011 was said to be among the guests at a B’nai B’rith salon but was dropped following the stir caused by the announcement of his presence. He contributed to ProRussia.tv, a short-lived Web television channel launched in 2012. He now focuses on Franco-Russian relationships and speaks regularly in Russia and on the French-speaking pro-Russian media (he has attended the Valdai Club and appears on *La Voix de la Russie* and Sputnik), prompting him to change the spelling of his first name from “Yvan” to Ivan.” He asserts that Russia represents the heritage of the Roman Empire, whereas the United States represents the Phoenicians, a mercantile and cosmopolitan civilization.⁸⁶

For all its vicissitudes, the GRECE’s doxa has nevertheless swiveled significantly toward a Eurasianist angle that was not formerly in its corpus, although in view of the movement’s roots, the

83 <https://www.egaliteetreconciliation.fr/Forum-eurasiste-de-Chi?inau-une-plateforme-non-alignee-contre-le-globalisme-49480.html>.

84 *Rivarol*, February 28, 1998; Pierre-Antoine Plaquevent, “Forum Eurasiste de Chisinau,” *Eurolibertés*, January 18, 2018, <http://eurolibertes.com/geopolitique/forum-eurasiste-de-chisinau/>.

85 See the video of the inaugural conference on his blog: “Lancement d’un Nouveau Think Tank: Geopragma,” *Géopolitique - Géostratégie - Analyses et Débats* (blog), February 25, 2018, <http://www.geopolitique-geostrategie.fr/lancement-dun-nouveau-think-tank-geopragma-92497>.

86 “L’Inversion des Pôles Géopolitiques : La Russie Conservatrice Remplace l’Amérique Décadente,” *Polemia*, June 2, 2015, <https://www.polemia.com/linversion-des-poles-geopolitiques-la-russie-conservatrice-remplace-lamerique-decadente/>.

move is not entirely illogical. In 1993, articles appeared in the French press denouncing the mounting of a “red-brown” danger against the Russian liberal president Boris Yeltsin. This caused Alain de Benoist to distance himself from the NOE and to bemoan the fact that Aleksandr Dugin had chosen to reuse the name of GRECE’s magazine for his own: *Elementy* was not short of iconographic references to Nazism, but until the press campaign in France against the “red-brown threat,” it offered a good many contributions from the French-speaking *Nouvelle Droite*, including from heterodox authors such as Jean Parvulesco and Trystan Mordrelle (Ogmios and GRECE).⁸⁷ Dugin also later worked more with supporters of schism and *völkisch* from the *Nouvelle Droite*, attending a colloquium in 2006 co-organized by *Synergies Européennes* and *Terre et Peuple*.⁸⁸ He developed his ideas within various French marginal structures, participating for instance in 2011 in a colloquium on occultism in Paris that was dedicated to René Guenon and attended by Orthodox Jews, militant pro-Palestinian Muslims, and anti-Zionist elites from the radical far right.⁸⁹

The changes to Dugin’s status in Russia inevitably meant that relationships changed. In November 2008, Alain de Benoist was received in Moscow with full honors: lectures at the Moscow State University, televised interviews, and public meetings with Aleksandr Dugin. In 2012, he was invited to Herzen University in St. Petersburg, then received Aleksandr Dugin in Paris for a common conference on “the Eurasianist way.”⁹⁰ Nevertheless, he refused to appear influenced by the Russian theoretician, saying to the French press, “I’ve met Dugin, but what he is suggesting is very particular and too Russian.”⁹¹

It is true that the *Nouvelle Droite*’s orientation to the East did not arrive via neo-Eurasianism but was indigenous to it, though the GRECE did not initially present it in that light to the wider public. Following François Mitterrand’s accession to the presidency of the French Republic in 1981, and the arrival of some Communist ministers, de Benoist and Vial stressed the nationalist nature of the USSR, with features closer to Great Russia than to Marxism.⁹² This reading of Russia has had some importance and reappears in the later quarrel between “Eurosiberia” partisans and the neo-Eurasianists.

87 Jean-Yves Camus, “A Long-Lasting Friendship: Aleksandr Dugin and the French Radical Right,” in Marlène Laruelle, ed., *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe–Russia Relationship* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 86.

88 Stéphane François, “L’Œuvre de Douguine au Sein de la Droite Radicale Française,” Diploweb, September 22, 2008, <https://www.diploweb.com/L-oeuvre-de-Douguine-au-sein-de-la.html>.

89 Jean-Yves Camus, “A Paris, René Guénon, les Kabbalistes et la Russie Nationaliste,” Temps Presents, February 22, 2011, <https://tempspresents.com/2011/02/22/jean-yves-camu-sguenon-dugin-kabbale/>.

90 “Alain de Benoist à Moscou,” Les Amis de Alain de Benoist, November 22, 2008, <https://www.alaindebenoist.com/2008/11/22/alain-de-benoist-a-moscou/>; “Conférence sur l’Eurasisme avec Alexandre Douguine et Alain de Benoist,” Egalité & Réconciliation, May 15, 2013, <https://www.egaliteetreconciliation.fr/Conference-sur-l-Eurasisme-avec-Alexandre-Douguine-et-Alain-de-Benoist-18045.html>

91 *Le Figaro*, February 9, 2017.

92 Pierre-André Taguieff, “Les Droites Radicales en France: Nationalisme Révolutionnaire et National-Libéralisme,” *Les Temps Modernes* (April–May 1985), 1781–1782.

III) Eurasia or Eurosiberia?

Developments in national communitarianism

On April 20, 2017, the PCN's "Transnational Political Office" announced that it was changing its name to become the neo-Eurasian Communitarian Party (*Parti Communautaire Néo-eurasien* - PCN) in order to defend the "Eurasian-African axis" advocated by its head, "the geopolitician Luc Michel," who was also president of Panafricom, a pan-African association. Michel, a Belgian militant, had made a name for himself by acting as advisor to the Burundian presidency, by the agit-prop he organized against the French intervention in Libya, and as director of the Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections (EODE), which validated the 2014 referendum justifying Russia's annexation of Crimea. Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer lists its members: "The EODE delegation was led by the Pole Mateusz Piskorski, former neo-Nazi, now vice-president of the populist party Samoobrona (Self-Defense). In June 2013, he was in Syria to support Bashar al-Assad. Among the other observers were members of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), the Vlaams Belang from Belgium, the Ataka from Bulgaria, the Italian parties Lega Nord and Fiamma Tricolore, Jobbik from Hungary, and the Serbian Dveri movement. Also present were the Frenchman Aymeric Chauprade, then foreign affairs advisor to Marine Le Pen and since a deputy to the European Parliament; Erkki Johan Blickman, a Finnish academic who recognizes neither Latvia nor Estonia and who was fired from the University of Helsinki for revisionism; and the Catalan neo-Nazi Enrique Ravello." A member of the Greek communist party and another from the German left Die Linke were also present.

The PCN, which says that it was conceived at a meeting of militant European nationalists with Jean Thiriart, claims to have been the victim of a "conspiracy of silence" in universities regarding its re-discovery of Eurasianism and National Bolshevism in 1984.⁹³ The movement has not been short of hagiographies of Thiriart since his death in 1992, presenting him as a geopolitical theoretician who met Zhou Enlai and influenced the Russian intelligentsia. Thiriart, an ex-

93 Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, "Crimée: Les Contradictions du Discours Russe," *Politique Etrangère* 1 (2015), https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/jeangenevilmerpe_1-2015_0.pdf; Luc Michel, "PCN-Timeline/Ideologie /1984: Le PCN Reinvente L'‘Eurasisme’ Moderne," Luc Michel's Transnational Action, May 30, 2014, <http://www.lucmichel.net/2014/05/30/pcn-timeline-ideologie-1984-le-pcn-reinvente-leurasisme-moderne/>; Maud de Bourqueney, "Luc Michel: 'La Libye N'est Pas du Tout un État Répressif,'" *Streetpress*, February 24, 2011, <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1901-luc-michel-la-libye-n-est-pas-du-tout-un-etat-repressif>; "le Nouveau PCN: Encore Plus Transnational, Encore Plus Révolutionnaire," *Palestine Solidarité*, April 20, 2017, <http://www.palestine-solidarite.org/communiquel.pcn.200417.htm>; Abel Mestre and Caroline Monnot, "Moscou-Paris-Vienne: Les Rencontres d'Aymeric Chauprade, Conseiller de Marine Le Pen," *Le Monde (blog)*, June 4, 2014, <http://droites-extremes.blog.lemonde.fr/2014/06/04/moscou-paris-vienne-les-rencontres-daymeric-chaupradeconseiller-de-marine-le-pen/>.

collaborator, ran and defined the credo of Young Europe (YE), a centralized far-right international movement advocating European unification into a single nation-state. From 1964, he tried to reach the Socialist bloc, sending Russian-language tracts to its militants for them to distribute and saying that they were “intended in particular for Soviet citizens staying in Western Europe: personnel from the embassies and consulates, or on trade missions.”⁹⁴ In the summer of 1966, the European Communitarian Party, a supplement to the YE founded in 1965, published an article in the Yugoslavian official review *Medunarodna Politika*, and relations between them were sufficiently good for the Party to decide to hold their 1967 summer camp in Romania.⁹⁵ Ten years later, Thiriart took a new, pro-Russian tack in a text that, though officially anonymous, is undoubtedly his. Statting “our principal enemy is the United States,” he put the basis for future developments which are, in the manner of Schmitt and Mackinder and later of Dugin, all linked to the idea of the thalassocracy—Athens, of course, but even more so Carthage, whereas “geopolitically, Great Russia is Europe.”⁹⁶ He said no more for nine years, then in 1983 distributed a handful of copies of a document in which he considered that “the Jewish-American and American-Zionist leaders were keen to dissolve the USSR,” and thought that an alliance between Europe and the USSR was desirable. Europe would expel the American army from its territory, while the USSR would recognize that Africa and the Middle East were within Europe’s sphere of influence, a sign that Thiriart had relinquished none of his Eurafrican thinking. According to him, the USSR and Western Europe should agree to follow a Monroe Doctrine of “Europe for Europeans,” a phrase in which we recognize the concepts of collaborationism and of the aims of the Third Reich,⁹⁷ or rather of the Third Reich’s subsequent representation.⁹⁸ From there, the partnership would develop into a Great Europe “from Dublin to Vladivostok,” unifying the whole of Eurasia into a new political unit.⁹⁹

94 AN/F/7/15256.

95 DGSN, DRG, “Les activités du Centre d’Études Politiques et Sociales Européennes,” *Bulletin hebdomadaire Notes et études*, October 5, 1966, p. 3, AN/19820599.

96 *Totalité*, July 25, 1974.

97 The slogan was used by Von Rheinbaben, the Reich’s former under-secretary of state, who proclaimed during a meeting of the Collaboration Group (whose splinter group Young Europe provided the basis of the PCN logotype) that “incorporating the African Empire into Europe is a necessity (...) Europe for Europeans, America for Americans” (DGNP, Inspection Générale des Services des Renseignements Généraux, “Partis et Groupements Politiques,” June 14, 1941, p. 15, AN/F/7/15588). “Europe for Europeans” is also the title of a work published by Pierre Daye in 1942. A former follower of Briand and pro-Eurafrica, and later a Rexist, Daye was a Euro-federalist who witnessed the birth of the International Workers Union from the war led by the Third Reich (Pierre Daye, *L’Europe aux Européens* (Brussels: Nouvelle Société d’Éditions, 1942), 163). He used this formula to legitimize the New European Order organized by the Third Reich, and was assumed to be targeting the duo of Great Britain and the USSR.

98 François Genoud (a Nazi Swiss banker) had Hitler’s notes dictated to Bormann edited in 1959. In them, Hitler states: “We must impose on Europe a Monroe Doctrine that applies to Europe: “Europe for Europeans!” [The Russians], constrained by events, will free themselves entirely from Jewish Marxism so that henceforth they will represent only the fiercest and most savage form of eternal pan-Slavism. As for the Americans, if they don’t soon manage to shake off the yoke of the New York Jews (...) then they’ll quickly sink—without ever having reached the age of reason.” See Adolf Hitler in *Le Testament Politique de Hitler: Notes Recueillies par Martin Bormann* (Paris, Fayard, 1959), 74 and 146-148.

99 Jean Thiriart, *Quel Destin pour la Bundeswehr? Mourir pour Washington ou Combattre pour la Naissance de*

It was after this text was published that Thiriart's ideas changed. From 1984, José Cuadrado Costa introduced references to the Russian Eurasianist movement of the 1920s, and thought that the USSR would adopt his views.¹⁰⁰ Thiriart picked up the same idea, speaking of the Euro-Soviet Empire; this did not mean making European nationalism socialist, but rather using the Russian imperialist power to nationalize Europe.¹⁰¹ Thiriart no longer envisaged taking Africa, and—more or less sharing Oswald Mosley's view¹⁰²—defined the Sahara as the lower limit for the great space that he asserted should have Istanbul as its capital.

Thiriart's debt to Cuadrado Costa is evident from the fact that he refers to the text in his correspondence, writing to a nationalist officer that it was important to insist on the distribution of this "very high quality" booklet addressed to an *educated* public."¹⁰³ In the PCN review, he explained that he and the Iberian publicist were seeking a new Stalin. The USSR had the "characteristic" that it had been able to preserve a "totalitarian" system. But his taste for Russian politics was sufficiently marked for him to quote Alexandre Zinoviev in glowing terms, without the references he used—Niekisch, Haushofer and Ribbentrop—being marred by their geographical and ideological origins.

Luc Michel took up Thiriart's ideas. The pseudo-division of the world at Yalta would be completed and "American-Zionist imperialism" would be ready to ally with China against the USSR, re-shuffling the cards:

We share the same historical destiny as the USSR and the same geopolitical determinisms. [...] Today, the USSR and Western Europe share the same common destiny. [...] There is just one route for Europe: that of the great Euro-Soviet space from Reykjavik to Vladivostok.

PCN brochures were even translated into Russian in an attempt to penetrate the Russian ideological market.¹⁰⁴ This inclination toward "the East" is strongly linked to the question of anti-Zionism, which acts as a geopolitical compass. The *Groupe du 12 mars* (March 12th Group), the embryonic international movement founded by Third Way (*Troisième Voie* - TV) in 1987, was for instance interested in the Russian nationalist association Pamiat,¹⁰⁵ defining it as an anti-Zionist movement

l'Europe? (Paris: Fayard, 1983).

100 José Cuadrado Costa, "Insuffisance et Dépassement du Concept Marxiste-Léniniste de Nationalité," *Conscience européenne* 9 (October 1984).

101 The representation of the USSR as the driving force behind nationalist Europe—and hence saved from the East—projects the German National Bolsheviks' concept of "last resort" onto the political reality of the 1980s. In the 1920s, they considered that importing Bolshevism would be "the last resort" to save the German nation from western subversion. See Louis Dupeux, *National-Bolchevisme. Stratégie Communiste et Dynamique Conservatrice* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1979).

102 Oswald Mosley, *La Nation Europe* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1962).

103 Letter from Thiriart, March 13, 1992.

104 *Conscience européenne* 8, July 1984.

105 Newsletter of the *Groupe du 12 mars*, 1990, 7 p. (internal document).

of the third way.¹⁰⁶ In 1990, a year before Dugin attended the GRECE's colloquium in Paris, the French NRs discovered him via a long interview translated from Italian. When the interview appeared in France, there was a difference of opinion regarding its inclinations toward conspiracy and René Guénon, but it nevertheless appeared in *Alternative tercériste*,¹⁰⁷ the magazine of radical supporters of the third way. The faction was led from within TV by Christian Bouchet, who would later direct *Nouvelle Résistance* (a movement that returned "National Bolshevism" to fashion across Europe via its European Liberation Front), and then by *Unité Radicale* (UR). The year the interview appeared, Aleksandr Dugin went to Paris and spent time with Russian emigrants and members of the *Nouvelle Droite*.¹⁰⁸

The PCN claimed to be at the leading edge of the junction between East and West because it organized a trip to send European nationalists to Moscow in the summer of 1992.¹⁰⁹ According to the political scientist Pierre-André Taguieff, the trip was by the New European Right.¹¹⁰ Thiriart had in fact stopped working with the PCN in 1988,¹¹¹ and the idea of a trip to Moscow to meet Aleksandr Dugin came initially from *Nouvelle Résistance*, who invited Thiriart.¹¹² By then, however, Dugin had already told Robert Steuckers (who was with Alain de Benoist in Moscow in March-April 1992) that he would like the Belgian theoretician, in turn, to come and give a lecture.¹¹³ It is, after all, entirely reasonable that in the Russian political climate of the period several different radical European nationalists should have wanted to bring the theoretician of the Euro-Soviet Empire to Moscow.

It is also true that Thiriart was in fact pushing the NRs to look towards the East, insisting that the French nationalists invest in the former East Germany and in Russia, since "it's there that we can perhaps start to set fire to the Carthaginian Empire."¹¹⁴ Thiriart was all the more enthusiastic because he was concerned to see his writings distributed in Russia. He wrote to Dugin asking him to bring Russian generals to the press conference, and offered to give lectures at the university in Moscow and to contact an American TV channel so it could follow them.¹¹⁵ For his part, when

106 *La Lettre tercériste* 3, February 1989 (internal document).

107 *Alternative tercériste*, December 1990 (internal document).

108 Camus, "A Long-Lasting Friendship," 85.

109 According to Luc Michel "I AM ALSO someone who in 1986 with my review *CONSCIENCE EUROPEENNE* reinvented EURASIANISM, forgotten since the end of the 1920s in the mists of the history of ideologies. Thiriart took my review to Moscow in 1992, and in reading it, Ziuganov (left-wing Eurasianism, adopted by Putin) and Dugin (right-wing Eurasianism) rediscovered Eurasianism in its modernized version, ours." See Luc Michel, "PCN-Timeline/Ideologie /1983-84: Le PCN Reinvente le 'National-Bolchevisme' Moderne," Luc Michel's Transnational Action, May 29, 2014, <http://www.lucmichel.net/2014/05/29/pcn-timeline-ideologie-1983-84-le-pcn-reinvente-le-national-bolchevisme-moderne/>.

110 Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite. Jalons d'une Analyse Critique* (Paris: Descartes et Cie, 1994).

111 Letter from Jean Thiriart, May 12, 1992.

112 Facts recounted in a letter from Thiriart, June 24, 1992.

113 Robert Steuckers, "Hommage à Jean Thiriart (1922-1992)," *Le Blog de Robert Steuckers (blog)*, 1992, <http://robertsteuckers.blogspot.fr/2014/03/hommage-jean-thiriart-1922-1992.html>.

114 Letter from Jean Thiriart, March 12, 1992.

115 Letter from Jean Thiriart, June 14, 1992.

Dugin wrote to one of his French correspondents, he did not hide his debt to the French-speaking publicist: “Before perestroika, we might hesitate and speak of the third way from a fascist-Evolian perspective. Now, it is Thiriart and he alone who has been proved to be right. Young Europe, the Euro-Soviet Empire, [is] the only theoretically correct nonconformist project.”¹¹⁶ In Moscow in 1992, the delegation from Western Europe held talks with *Den’*, Aleksandr Dugin, the Anti-Zionist Committee, the editorial staff of *La Russie Soviétique*, Geydar Dzhemal (a representative of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Russia, he was close to Dugin), Egor Ligachev, Gennadi Ziuganov, Vladimir Zhirinovskii, and Viktor Anpilov.¹¹⁷ The meetings the NR held during the summer of 1992 also impacted the electioneering parties, since in the autumn, Eduard Limonov—a comrade both of Dugin and of French members of the *Nouvelle Résistance*—organized a meeting between Jean-Marie Le Pen and Vladimir Zhirinovskii, which resulted in a still-born project to create an international nationalist movement.¹¹⁸ Similarly, it was the NR member Yves Bataille, then close to the PCN, who helped organize Jean-Marie Le Pen’s trip to Belgrade in 1997.¹¹⁹

Neo-Eurasianism was thus an important stepping-stone for far-right Russophilia, and in Western Europe it arose from the need to legitimize the crises in the radical fringes and reposition them after the fall of the USSR. The schism in the *Nouvelle Droite* formed by the creation of the transnational network *Synergies Européennes* in 1994 highlighted these “geopolitical” issues, even if the breach was primarily to do with a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis. This instrumentalization of concepts would lead to debates between Eurasia and Eurosiberia.

Disputes among alterophobes

When the FN split in 1998-1999, the radicals, like most of the FN militants and elite, chose to join Bruno Mégret’s *Mouvement National Républicain* (MNR). *Terre et Peuple* thus became a satellite of the MNR, as did *Unité Radicale* (UR), which succeeded *Nouvelle Résistance* but took a much firmer ethnicist line. As the two groups jostled for supremacy within the narrow space of ethno-regionalist pro-European radical militants, they mirrored each other: the first was pagan, the second secular; they both claimed counter-revolutionary roots, the first from royalists (Chouans), the second from the anti-Revolutionary Conspiracy of Equals (*Conjuration des Égaux*), etc. UR found a modernized reformulation of its ideological horizon in the publications of Aleksandr Dugin that it distributed in France. In conflict with the *Nouvelle Droite*, Guillaume Faye proposed a new political

¹¹⁶ Letter from Aleksandr Dugin, September 22, 1996.

¹¹⁷ Marlène Laruelle, “Aleksandr Dugin, Esquisse d’un Eurasisme d’Extrême Droite en Russie Post-Soviétique,” *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest* 32, no. 3 (2001): 87; *Lutte du peuple*, September 1992.

¹¹⁸ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, 49.

¹¹⁹ Yves Bataille, personal interview with the author, August 21, 2004.

program, structured primarily by Islamophobia. It was refused by UR, propelled by its radical anti-Zionism to honor both Al-Qaeda and the Hamas kamikazes.¹²⁰ Guillaume Faye called for a reversal of the movement's geopolitical representation:

“The plan implicit in Islam is quite simply to conquer Europe, in terms both of religion and of ethnicity, as stipulated in the Koran. We are already at war. The West has not understood this. But Russia has. [Eurosiberia will] unify Western Europe, Central Europe and Russia, that is, the Indo-European peoples. The model based on the Roman Empire—which was inspired by the cosmopolitan Alexander and tempted not only Napoleon, but also, let us not forget, Stalin—is undermined at the core by its quest for multi-ethnic expansion.”¹²¹

Eurosiberia and Eurasia thus became ideological products used to justify the turf wars between movements. According to TP, Eurosiberia would be catalyzed by the future race wars inevitable within multi-racial societies. This type of prophecy was confined to the margins during the movement's first twenty years, but France's socio-political evolution transformed it into a massive cultural consumable, one that has been amplified by the migrant crisis. Emmanuel Leroy sees a point of convergence there: according to him, a large proportion of the Russian elite is today convinced that the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural situation of Western Europe will lead to its downfall, forcing Russia to intervene “as it did in Syria.” The way in which the Kremlin fought against the jihadis in Chechnya and normalize the republic is perceived as a model,¹²² and this goes back to the neo-Eurasian concept of an internal Islam.

Not so for partisans of Eurosiberia. The ethnic views that distinguish it from neo-Eurasianism ultimately encourage a re-appropriation of the idea of the unity of the white world. Guillaume Faye and Pierre Vial point to the construction of a Septentrion (i.e. an alliance of white Nordic peoples) as the stage following Eurosiberia. Such a process might well correspond to Russian aims: the former French minister Edgard Pisani pointed out to a close advisor of Mikhail Gorbachev that the concept of a “common house” could not work without Siberia, to which his counterpart replied that the common house went from Brest to New York via Vladivostok. For Pisani, this meant that “the East” was choosing “the North” to join the geopolitical center and moving away from the periphery represented by “the South”.¹²³ The neo-Eurasianist geopolitics of Dugin and his followers certainly divide the world into zones,¹²⁴ but use an inclusive dialectic,

120 *Jeune Résistance*, May 1997; *Jusqu'à Nouvel ordre* 5 (2002).

121 Guillaume Faye, *La Colonisation de l'Europe* (Paris: Aencre, 2000), 69-148.

122 Leroy, interview.

123 Ideas translated into French by Christian Bouchet: “Dossier: L'Eurasisme Contemporain,” *La Nation Eurasiennne* (June 2003).

124 Conseil de l'Europe, *Les Défis pour la Société Européenne à l'Aube de l'An 2000* (Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe, 1993), 55.

whereas the ultimate goals of the Eurosiberian project relate clearly to Westernism and reject any aspect that is multi-ethnic or multi-cultural.

The Eurosiberia process led to a meeting in Moscow on June 8 and 9, 2006: the “International Conference on the Future of the White World.” The conference promoted the foundation of an Identitarian Nations Organization in parallel with the United Nations Organization. The signatories to its declaration¹²⁵ were neo-pagans linked to dissenters from the New Right: Anatoli Ivanov, *Synergies Européennes*, Russia; Pierre Vial, *Terre et Peuple*, France; Pierre Krebs, Thule Seminar, Germany;¹²⁶ Enrique Ravello, *Tierra y Pueblo*, Spain; Guillaume Faye, France; Yann-Ber Tillenon,¹²⁷ Breizh (i.e. Brittany), France; Pavel Tulaev, Atheneum, Russia; Elephterios Ballas, Arma, Greece; Galina Lozko, Ukraine; and Vladimir Avdeev, Russia.¹²⁸ The following year, these groups broke with Faye, who favored an alliance with the Jews against the Arab Muslims. Nevertheless, Faye remains a pro-Russian publicist, and held a conference at the Moscow Academy of Sciences, an event reported by media in France close to the Kremlin.¹²⁹ His proposed Septentrion also attracted the attention of the American alt-right.¹³⁰

The idea of a new alliance had inspired the militant radicals since 2001. In addition, the journalists Dominique Albertini and David Doucet reported that the UR militant Maxime Brunerie might have acted with Joël Sambius, a Frenchman living in Moscow and suspected of running a far-right pro-Israeli site. Brunerie had prompted the UR’s dissolution by attempting to shoot French president Jacques Chirac on July 14, 2002, on the grounds that he had been an agent for the ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government). Arrested in Moscow in 2003, Sambius seems to have benefited from the pusillanimity of the Russian police and courts, and the charge was dismissed in 2009.¹³¹ The secular anti-Zionist radical far right continued to take a pro-Eurasianist line. In 2016, Christian Bouchet published a French translation of Aleksandr Dugin’s *The Fourth Political Theory* with a foreword by Alain Soral, in which the latter describes meeting the Russian publicist for the first

125 Roberto Fiorini, “Conférence Internationale sur ‘L’Avenir du Monde Blanc,’” *Roberto Fiorini (blog)*, June 5, 2007, <https://robertofiorini.blog4ever.com/conference-internationale-sur-l-avenir-du-monde-blanc>.

126 Krebs was originally a French militant, an officer in the *Rassemblement Européen de la Liberté* that predated the GRECE.

127 In April 1987, Yann-Ber Tillenon resigned from the GRECE, and a month later, Guillaume Faye also left. Pierre Vial then wrote to members of the GRECE explaining that the leavers were trying to destroy the movement. This led to a break with those closest to Nazism, since the same text stated that Olivier Mathieu, a militant neo-Nazi active in the GRECE, should no longer be invited to any event and should be considered “provocative.”

128 Avdeev was arrested that same year for decapitating Uzbek migrants. See “Siberia’s Most Wanted Man—‘Rambo of the Taiga’—Nabbed After 4 Months on Run,” *The Siberian Times*, October 2, 2013, <http://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/siberias-most-wanted-man-rambo-of-the-taiga-nabbed-after-4-months-on-run/>.

129 “La Russie Sauvera l’Europe!” *Sputnik*, November 6, 2012, <https://fr.sputniknews.com/analyse/201211061022497470-la-russie-sauvera-l-europe/>. Sputnik has not reported Guillaume Faye’s stances since 2015.

130 Greg Johnson, “Project Septentrion: The Last Line of Defense,” Counter-Currents Publishing, August 26, 2010, <https://www.counter-currents.com/2010/08/project-septentrion/>.

131 Dominique Albertini and David Doucet, *La Fachosphère. Comment l’Extrême Droite Remporte la Bataille du Net* (Paris: Flammarion, 2016), 95-128.

time in January 2011¹³² during the café debate “Why must we love Vladimir Putin?” they held in Paris with Christian Bouchet in a bar owned by a member of the *Renouveau Français* and the *Parti Antisioniste*.¹³³

The ways in which these various movements reconcile their religious and geopolitical views may be surprising. But if the question of “values” is often used to justify right-wing Franco-Russian rapprochement, we should also consider reasons endemic to the far right: to be on the radical far right in France in the period 1980-1990 was to be a neo-pagan. The quarrel between neo-pagans and Catholics is no longer current: many radicals (some well-known, including Christian Bouchet and the former *Identitaire* and current FN supporter Philippe Vardon) have returned to Christianity. Vardon sees the return to Christ as a response to the Islamist dynamic, a framing that makes reconciliation easier: Emmanuel Leroy, a former member of the GRECE, now thinks that Christianity is, at its essence, the traditional form best adapted to resist the modern world (these phrases should be understood in the sense given to them by Evola and Guenon).¹³⁴ We can, of course, draw a parallel with the spiritual evolution of Aleksandr Dugin, and this joint movement makes rapprochement easier—although the forms of Islam and Judaism that Dugin considers to be traditional and to which he extends a hand cannot both be accepted, according to his French counterparts.

The contrasting doctrines of Eurasia and Eurosiberia have even shaped the antagonism between Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen. A partisan of the Europe of nations, Jean-Marie Le Pen decided his line on the East in 2007, defining it as extending “from Brest to Vladivostok” and adding that it included “the nations of Central and Western Europe, the Slav countries, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova.”¹³⁵ When the conflict with his daughter began, he started to use the provocative expression “Boreal Europe” in the media. This term had formerly been almost absent from Le Pen’s discourse, with the notable exception of a trip to Moscow in 2005, when he defined it as extending “from Brest to Vladivostok.”¹³⁶ In 2015, he stated, “It is imperative that we get on with Russia to save Boreal Europe and the white world. Boreal Europe includes the Slavs, but also Siberia, which I am afraid that the Russians cannot keep just for themselves.”¹³⁷ In this particular

132 Aleksandr Dugin, *La Quatrième Théorie Politique: La Russie et les Idées Politiques du XXIème Siècle* (Nantes: Ars Magna, 2016).

133 Aleksandr Dugin’s intervention is available here: “L’Intervention d’Alexandre Douguine ‘Pourquoi Faut-Il Aimer Vladimir Poutine,’” *Nazbol France (blog)*, April 7, 2011, <http://nazbol-france.blogspot.fr/2011/04/lintervention-dalexandre-douguine.html>; Camus, “A Long-Lasting Friendship,” 88.

134 Interviews.

135 “Jean-Marie Le Pen: ‘Je N’ai Pas Changé dans Mes Convictions,’” *Le Monde*, March 23, 2007, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/03/23/jean-marie-le-pen-je-n-ai-pas-change-dans-mes-convictions_886730_3224.html#KwF82ZdmP0OXFxbu.99.

136 Madeleine Vatel, “Jean-Marie Le Pen Vante à Moscou l’Europe Boréale,” *Le Monde*, June 29, 2005, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2005/06/29/jean-marie-le-pen-vante-a-moscou-l-europe-boreale_667346_3214.html.

137 Jean-Marie Le Pen, interview with *Rivarol*, April 7, 2015.

case, Le Pen was using this loaded ethno-cultural argument to try to provoke his daughter, but this also emphasizes the importance of geopolitical debate within far-right movements and the behaviors that go with them.

Marine Le Pen's program for the 2012 presidential election took a continentalist line: she promoted a "*Pan-European union* of sovereign states including Russia and Switzerland that respects neutral status, national law, and national taxation...Turkey will not be part of this plan."¹³⁸ The plan was ambiguous and discreetly brushed aside countries such as Ukraine. The concept of "great communities" she espoused at the time already drew on radical thinkers, via her advisor Emmanuel Leroy. Nevertheless, up to the presidential elections in 2017, she continued to develop her sovereignist vision of the nation, so much so that her introductory speech for the campaign defended a world order of nations whose sovereignty would extend from trade to the preservation of culture against globalization, against a backdrop that had more in common with an "Identitarian Nations Organization" than with a "United Nations Organization."¹³⁹ This particular geopolitical debate also helps us understand the passion of some French nationalists for Donbas.

IV) In Russia's orbit

Limits and confines

Being in Russia's gravitational force field has largely determined the orientation of French far-right groups. The initial focus was on Crimea and Donbas, but the *Collectif France-Russie* was founded in 2008 to defend Russia in French public opinion after the Russian-Georgian war and the secession of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

When the FN was created, Ukrainians in France comprised just 3,300 political refugees. Several associations openly claimed allegiance to the historical figure of the nationalist Stepan Bandera. The Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (BAN) was in touch with General Paul Vanuxem,

138 "Présentation du Projet Présidentiel de Marine Le Pen," MarineLePen.fr, November 19, 2011, <http://www.marinelepen.fr/2011/11/presentation-du-projet-presidentiel-de-marine-le-pen/>.

139 "The utopia of a world power heralds the destruction of the diversity of nations and of peoples: it is a declaration of war against political freedom, or in other words the human condition, and it is the primary threat to world peace (...). History is again on the march, dissent is on the rise, and the world is not being reduced to its usefulness, irrespective of all the merchants and all those who want to shrink it into a financial casino! (...) Yes to multiculturalism on a planetary scale; no to multiculturalism within a single country. (...) The Universal Declaration deals with the rights of the individual: I will propose to the United Nations that it be supplemented and completed with provisions that guarantee the rights of human societies. The right to environmental safety, right to the integrity of their institutions, of their laws, of their government; the right to decide how to use their resources, the right to define the social and fiscal rules that apply in their territory. And, finally, the right to their moral and cultural integrity. (...) The time has come to reinstate France, free, equal and sovereign, among the other nations, they themselves free, equal and sovereign" (Speech by Marine Le Pen at the Estivales de Fréjus, September 18, 2016).

also a lobbyist for Taiwan and a member of the French Committee for Information and European Freedoms (founded in 1970) of which he was co-president with André Chauvain, former chairman of the Shell petrol company and an honorary member of the Kuomintang.¹⁴⁰ The BAN had contacts with French, German, and Belgian reserve officers, forming a liaison committee for the exchange of documents and information on “communist subversion” and supporting the positions of Germans in the *Aktion Wisterstand* on the nature of the Oder-Neise line. French members also wanted to re-launch the *Centre d’Études de la Défense Nationale*, one of the associations classified as subversive by the French Directorate-General for National Security (*Direction générale de la Sûreté nationale*) in 1961.¹⁴¹ Within the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), Duprat, surprisingly, occupied the post of representative of the Canadian League for the Liberation of Ukraine.¹⁴² The international anti-communist movement thus allowed a range of encounters: the international conference held in the Philippines in 1965 was attended by the BAN, the NTS, and Suzanne Labin, who would go on to head the French WACL.¹⁴³

The FN was therefore initially sympathetic to Ukrainian nationalists. This did not yet mean any geopolitical coherence: during the 1990s, the FN had links to România Mare, a Romanian movement calling for the creation of a Great Romania to include Moldova and the Ukrainian territories north of Bukovina. (The PCN was more consistent, siding with Transnistria against Moldova and then providing observers during the 2006 referendum against, in the words of the pro-Russian authorities, “Moldovan fascism.”)¹⁴⁴ Between August 8 and 22, 2004, a delegation of young FN members led by regional representatives was officially received at the Ukrainian far-right Svoboda party’s summer camp.¹⁴⁵ In 2009, the two parties signed a co-operation agreement¹⁴⁶ and contributed to the Alliance of European National Movements (AEMN), recognized as a European political party in 2012 and chaired by Bruno Gollnisch, who had been in charge of international relations at the FN since 1994.¹⁴⁷ Tensions arose in 2011, a few months before Marine Le Pen took

140 DCRG, “Propagande Anticommuniste International,” *Informations hebdomadaires*, April 17, 1971, p. 1, AN/F/7/15573; *ibid.*, “De Quelques Organisations et Personnalités Etrangères Anti-Soviétiques en France,” *Bulletin confidentiel*, December 1971, pp. 1-3, AN/F/7/15584.

141 DCRG, “Développement de l’Anticommunisme International,” *Informations hebdomadaires*, June 17, 1971, 3 p., AN/F/7/15573

142 Frédéric Laurent, *L’Orchestre noir* (Paris: Stock, 1978), 302.

143 “The 11th Annual Conference of The Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League, which met in Manila, the Philippines, in September 7-12, 1965 addresses this appeal to the 20th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,” *New York Times* via CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP73-00475R000101390001-3.pdf>.

144 “Etudes de Luc Michel,” <http://www.pcn-npc.com/editos/fr/ed-061218-1.htm> and <http://www.pcn-npc.com/front/transnistrie.htm>.

145 <https://books.google.fr/books/content?id=GSckAQAAIAAJ&hl=fr&pg=RA7-PA34&img=1&pgis=1&dq=%22front+national%22+ukrainiens&sig=ACfU3U3DVaLKmmuNE2uTHBYu5nsogkJP CQ&edge=0>

146 “Vseukrains’ke ob’ednaniia ‘Svoboda’ ta Natsionalnii front frantsii pidpisali Protokol pro spivpratsiu,” *Svoboda*, November 23, 2009, <http://svoboda.org.ua/news/events/00082844/>.

147 The AEMN was something of a hodgepodge. Other than the FN and Svoboda, it included groups associated in various ways: the *Movimiento Social Republicano* (Spain), the *Jobbik* (Hungary), the *Movimento Sociale Italiano-*

the lead of the NF. When Svoboda decided to participate in the *Forum Nation* in France organized by Yvan Benedetti, Marine Le Pen sent an email asserting that this was counter to their agreement and breaking off relations. (Benedetti was an officer in the neo-fascist *Œuvre Française* who had been expelled from the FN a few months previously after stating that he was “anti-Zionist, anti-Semite, and anti-Jew.”) Svoboda fell into line and did not attend.¹⁴⁸ However, it appears that some Svoboda officers maintained contact, leading to some confusion: in 2013, the party issued a statement via a member of its political office on the meetings and relationships between its directorate and that of the FN, but the FN did not publicize it.¹⁴⁹

The gulf separating these groups became evident during the Ukraine crisis in 2014, coinciding with the municipal and European elections in France. The FN issued a pro-Russian statement signed by Aymeric Chauprade,¹⁵⁰ following personal statements by Marion Maréchal-Le Pen condemning the “neo-Nazi militias” active in Maidan. Svoboda’s vice-president sent a concerned letter to FN officers dated March 7, but this elicited no reaction from them.¹⁵¹

However, at the same time, a Russian hacktivist disclosed that Timur Prokopenko, Kremlin Head of Media, was trying to arrange for Marine Le Pen to visit Crimea. In fact, it was her advisor for international affairs since 2010, Chauprade, who went there as a member of EODE—with the apparent aim of facilitating the FN’s day-to-day existence. In April, the FN’s financing body, Cotelec, chaired by Jean-Marie Le Pen, received a loan of 2 million euros from a Cypriot company financed from Russia. In September, the party was loaned 9 million euros by the First Czech Russian Bank.¹⁵² The bank later went into liquidation, as did the (likewise Russian) Strategy Bank, with which the FN negotiated a new loan in 2016.¹⁵³ When Le Pen affirmed her support for Russia’s policy on Ukraine before the Duma in May 2015, a press release from Sputnik, published in Russian and not translated by the French office, stated that the meeting was also to do with

Fiamma Tricolore (Italy), the British National Party (Great Britain), the *Front National* (Belgium), and *National Demokraterna* (Sweden).

148 Abel Mestre and Caroline Monnot, “Yvan Benedetti Se Dote d’une Petite ‘Force de Frappe’ en Région Lyonnaise,” *Le Monde (blog)*, October 14, 2011, <http://droites-extremes.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/10/14/yvan-benedetti-se-dote-dune-petite-force-de-frappe-en-region-lyonnaise/>.

149 “The Head of the Svoboda’s Analytical Service Yuriy Levchenko and a Member of the National Front’s Political Council Thibaut de La Tocnaye Met in Paris Recently,” *Svoboda*, July 24, 2013, <http://en.svoboda.org.ua/news/events/00000618/>; email from Louis Aliot, February 15, 2018.

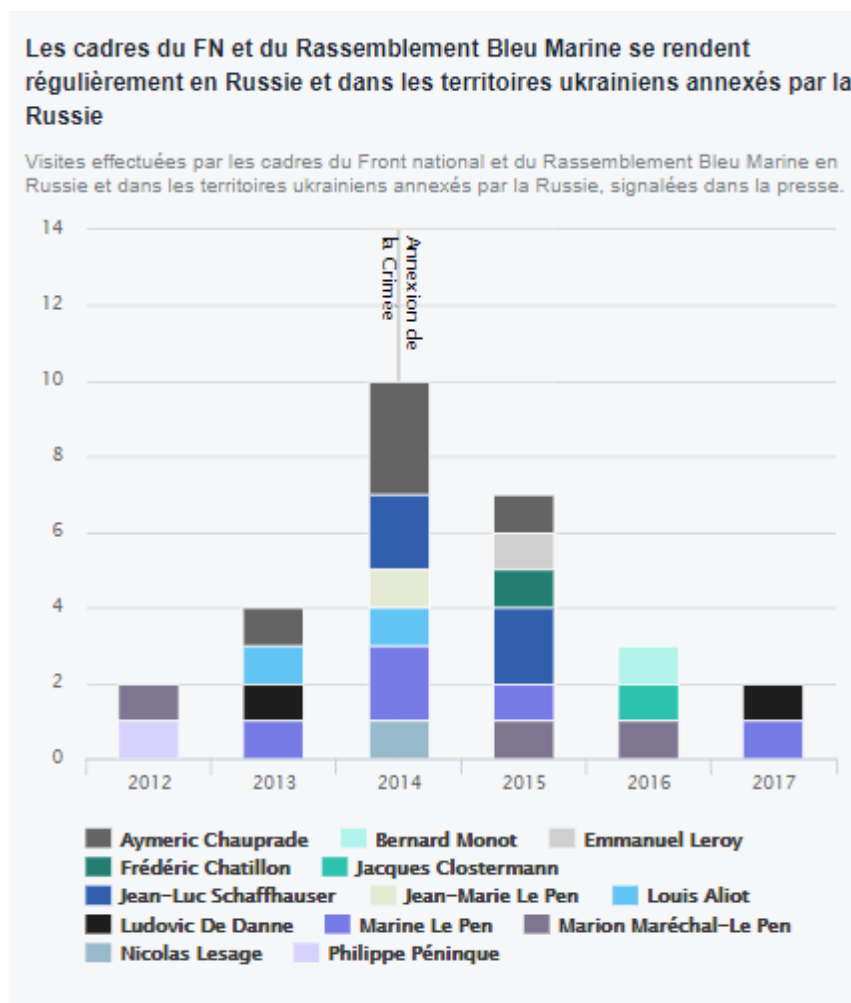
150 Now missing from the site, it was previously available at the URL <http://www.frontnational.com/2014/03/urgence-humanitaire-en-ukraine-russophone-et-en-crimee-russe-le-front-%20national-appelle-au-dialogue-et-a-lapaisement/>. It can be found here on a regional blog: Stéphane Poncet, “Urgence Humanitaire en Ukraine Russophone et en Crimée Russe: Le Front National Appelle au Dialogue et à l’Apaisement,” *Blog de Stéphane Poncet: Front National de Villeurbanne*, March 3, 2014, <http://fnvilleurbanne.over-blog.com/article-urgence-humanitaire-en-ukraine-russophone-et-en-crimee-russe-le-front-national-appelle-au-dialogue-e-122800329.html>.

151 “Lettre de Svoboda au Front National (exclusivité Contre-info),” *Contre-info*, March 10, 2014, <http://www.contre-info.com> <http://www.contre-info.com/lettre-de-svoboda-au-front-national-exclusivite-contre-info>.

152 Agathe Duparc, Karl Laske, and Marine Turchi, “Crimée et Finances du FN: Les Textos Secrets du Kremlin,” *Mediapart*, April 2, 2015, <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/020415/crimee-et-finances-du-fn-les-textos-secrets-du-kremlin>.

153 Motet, “Visites, Financement.”

negotiating a loan.¹⁵⁴ Trips by senior FN staff to Russia thus combined political and financial aspects, and both aspects flourished. The newspaper *Le Monde* identified the trips reported by leading Le Pen supporters in the chart below:¹⁵⁵



Of course, not all these trips were politically unequivocal. In May 2014, Chauprade attended a congress in Vienna celebrating the anniversary of the *Sainte-Alliance*. Although Maréchal Le Pen appeared at the closing dinner, those with her assured the press that she had in no way met or talked with Aleksandr Dugin, the star of the show.¹⁵⁶

Henceforth, complimentary references to Svoboda appeared only on the site of the *Parti Nationaliste Français*, a small group formed from the *Œuvre Française* after its dissolution by the French authorities in 2013. In the autumn of 2014, Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, FN European deputy, member of the steering committee of the *Union Paneuropéenne de France* and a founding member of the Rhine-Volga Association, was a member of the delegation of far-right international observers responsible for confirming the probity of the parliamentary elections held in the self-proclaimed Republic of Donbas. He returned in May 2015 to participate in an official symposium with Alain

154 Hénin, *La France Russe*, 146.

155 Motet, “Visites, Financement.”

156 Mestre and Monnot, “Moscou-Paris-Vienne.”

Fragny of the *Bloc Identitaire* and Emmanuel Leroy, where he defended a Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Beijing axis, suggesting that he had been in contact with a radical geopolitical culture.¹⁵⁷ He headed a small FN team that included Nicolas Lesage, Le Pen's Chief of Staff. According to Chauprade, who is also an FN European deputy and is geopolitical advisor to the party's president, the trip was a response to the 11-million-euro loan made by Russian banks to the FN: "It was a consideration for the loan: going to Donbas demonstrated strong support for Russia." The loan was achieved at least in part through the contacts of Schaffhauser, who began working in Russia in 2000 as a consultant for Dassault, Total and Auchan.¹⁵⁸

Engagements

The FN has not be the only one showing a pro-Russian stance justified by the concept of *souverainisme*. For instance, in response to the events in Ukraine, President Hollande canceled the delivery of two French Mistral helicopter carriers that Russia had ordered in 2010. A protest in the naval shipyards of Saint-Nazaire was mounted by *Mistral Gagnons!*, a group run jointly by members of *Debout la France* (the party of Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, who formed an alliance with Le Pen between the two rounds of the 2017 presidential election) and regional FN representatives led by Gauthier Bouchet, the son of Christian Bouchet.¹⁵⁹ The partnership had been approved by the FN congress in November 2014, when the address by Andrei Issaev, vice-president of the Duma and a member of United Russia, received a standing ovation.¹⁶⁰ Such positioning influenced the FN European deputies who led the group *Europe des Nations et des Libertés* (ENL) in the European parliament. According to Jean-Yves Camus, "The ENL deputies consistently defend Russia's interests, whether during their work on the different committees, during plenary sessions or in their voting: the ENL deputies voted against resolutions unfavorable to the Kremlin's interests in 93% of the votes held between July 2014 and July 2015."¹⁶¹

The French far right is thus oriented strongly toward Russia on the Ukrainian question. Sometimes, a group keeps its distance, as with *Terre et Peuple*, which, in the face of rampant Russophilia, stresses that "Russia provides us with a model to learn from, even opportunities we can use, but it is not the route to our salvation: that depends solely on us."¹⁶² Some marginal groups have continued to support the Ukrainians, such as the GUD in Lyon and New-Right member Pascal

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right*, 200-201.

¹⁵⁸ Destal and Turchi, "*Marine est au Courant de Tout*", 319-321; Hénin, *La France Russe*, 153.

¹⁵⁹ Claire Dubois, "Mistral: 2 Manifestations le 7 Septembre," *Ouest-France*, August 25, 2014, <https://www.ouest-france.fr/pays-de-la-loire/mistral-2-manifestations-le-7-septembre-2778368>. The name "*Mistral Gagnons*" is a play on words referring to a popular song about childhood.

¹⁶⁰ Mestre and Monnot, "Les Réseaux du Front National," 70.

¹⁶¹ Jean-Yves Camus, "Le Front National et les Relations Internationales," Fondation Jean Jaurès, August 31, 2016, <https://jean-jaures.org/nos-productions/le-front-national-et-les-relations-internationales>.

¹⁶² *Terre et Peuple* 70 (Winter 2016).

Lassale. In 2017, both were involved in creating the *Reconquista*, a “pan-European” movement (with an unashamedly pro-Nazi style) that opposes “Putin’s anti-national regime,” which it considers divides European peoples. *Reconquista* wants to construct the “Intermarium,” meaning a Europe with frontiers at the Adriatic, the Baltic, and the Black Seas.¹⁶³ Christian Bouchet has denounced the project as Atlanticist and anti-nationalist, even stressing that some Italians in the *Reconquista* network had formerly been members of Gladio, implying that the idea of an Intermarium would become an instrument used by NATO to divide Eurasia.¹⁶⁴ The Intermarium notion finds itself now again on the agenda of the Polish government, but combined with a commitment to the European Union, whereas the Ukrainian Azov movement considered it an anti-liberal replacement for the EU. Neither version has been able to retain attention in the debate in France.¹⁶⁵

Such ideological initiatives constantly refer back to memories of the European engagement on the Eastern Front in 1942, and some militants have indeed chosen to go so far as physical engagement. One example is *Unité Continentale*, a group founded by two ex-servicemen: Nicolas Perovic and Victor Lenta. Lenta was initially dismissed from the French army on suspicion of setting fire to a mosque, and boasts on social networks of gratifying his taste for attacks on migrants.¹⁶⁶ According to a dossier at the French Central Directorate of Internal Intelligence (*Direction centrale du renseignement intérieur* - DCRI), he became heavily involved as a militant in the *Bloc Identitaire* (BI)¹⁶⁷ in Toulouse, making applications to authorize demonstrations at the Prefecture in the name of the *Jeunesses Identitaires*.¹⁶⁸ When the Toulouse *Identitaires* were disrupted after their leader was detained in June 2012 (for aggravated assault on a Chilean student), he formed a section of the *Jeunesses Nationalistes* (the OF’s youth movement), but his role as leader was disputed and he moved closer to Rodolphe Crevel’s *Lys Noir*¹⁶⁹ and to the *Troisième*

163 See Reconquista Europe (blog), <http://reconquista-europe.tumblr.com/post/152563465816/en-reconquista-reconquista-is-an-international> and Olena Semenyaka, “Compte-Rendu de la Première Réunion ‘Paneuropa’ (2e partie),” *Europe Maxima*, October 2, 2017, <http://www.europemaxima.com/compte-rendu-de-la-premiere-reunion-paneuropa-2e-partie-par-olena-semenyaka/>.

164 Christian Bouchet, “Intermarium, L’Extrême-Droite Contre le Continent,” *Geopolitika.ru*, September 19, 2017, <https://www.geopolitika.ru/fr/article/intermarium-lextreme-droite-contre-le-continent>.

165 See, in this regard, the analysis of Andreas Umland: “Nous Avons Rencontré Andreas Umland,” *Le Grand Continent*, August 25, 2017, <https://legrandcontinent.eu/2017/08/25/nous-avons-rencontre-andreas-umland/>.

166 “Cet Ancien Para de Carcassonne qui Combat aux Côtés des ‘Pro-Russes,’” *La Depeche*, August 28, 2014, <https://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2014/08/28/1940999-ancien-para-carcaassonne-combat-cotes-pro-russes.html>.

167 Founded after the dissolution of *Unité Radicale* under the ideological influence of Guillaume Faye, the BI hoped for a time to rival the FN, but since 2014 has actually lost a number of officers and representatives to it.

168 Founded after the UR’s dissolution but taking a line stressing Islamophobia rather than anti-Zionism, the movement has nevertheless been prosecuted for reconstituting the dissolved league. The JI were replaced by *Génération Identitaire* in 2012.

169 A Royalist activist, he joined the *Mouvement Nationaliste-Révolutionnaire*, from which he had been excluded in 1985. He later dabbled in crime before returning to militarism with the *Lys Noir*, a group adapting Maurras’ thinking to ethnicist Identitarianism, and denounced the Masonic character of the *Action Française* (*Action française universitaire*, December 12, 2013—despite the title, this is the newsletter of the *Lys Noir* and not the AF). In 2017, he was sentenced to six months in prison for provoking racial hatred.

Voie.¹⁷⁰ He then left France and joined the *Unité Continentale* fighting team in Donbas.¹⁷¹

Even though *Unité Continentale*'s manifesto claims affiliation with Dugin and disowns a Europe of "carnal homelands," its representation of "continentalism (or Eurasianism)" is not orthodox.¹⁷² It evokes instead the co-nationalist arguments of Szálazi, the leader of the Hungarian Arrow Cross party, integrated into the French far right corpus during the Second World War by François Duprat and recently revived by Christian Bouchet's publishing house.¹⁷³ The group has achieved some media coverage, and when certain of its members were arrested, Sputnik could portray the Ukrainian detention centers as paralleling Nazi concentration camps.¹⁷⁴ *Unité Continentale* was officially dissolved in January 2015 (its Twitter account had been inactive since December 2014) and the following June, the secessionist authorities in Donbas indicated that they no longer wished to receive foreign volunteers. At the end of the year, a Belgian former volunteer declared that there were no longer any French people present in Donetsk and Lugansk.¹⁷⁵

The support from French nationalists had more to do with psychological warfare and manipulation of opinion than military operations in the true sense. A briefly-available leak by an employee from the press office for Donbas, picked up and analyzed by the site Streetpress,¹⁷⁶ showed what was actually happening in the field. An email dated September 16, 2015 listed twelve members of *Unité Continentale* present in Donbas; another dated February 26, 2016 gave the same number of French present as combatants, including two wounded and three who had not yet arrived. The latest photographs of their stay in Donbas in October 2016, published online by the *Brigandes* (a female identitarian folk group from a sectarian community), show one of the young women with four fighters, captioned "French volunteers side by side with Donbas forces."¹⁷⁷

The volunteers were not necessarily standard-issue soldiers: an email dated November 13, 2015 stated that a 52-year-old man totally unknown to the Donbas authorities had offered his services. The local administration also observed French nationalists in this media war acting on the

170 This is not the TV referenced above, but a group launched in 2010 that adopted its name and was dissolved by the French state in 2013.

171 Biographical information from a dossier on the radical and activist far right in Toulouse.

172 *Unité Continentale*, https://www.facebook.com/pg/unite.continentale/about/?ref=page_internal.

173 François Duprat, "Naissance et Développement du Fascisme Hongrois," *La Revue d'Histoire du fascisme* (September - October 1972): 185; Ferenc Szálazi, *Grand Espace, Espace Vital, Peuple Guide* (Nantes: Ars Magna, 2017).

174 "Donbass: L'Unité Continentale S'Inquiète de la Capture de Volontaires," *Sputnik*, July 28, 2014, <https://fr.sputniknews.com/actualite/201407281022886506-donbass-l-unite-continentale-s-inquiete-de-la-capture-de-volontaires/>.

175 "Entretien Exclusif de NATION avec un Ex-Volontaire de la République Populaire de Donetsk!" *Jeune Nation (blog)*, December 19, 2015, <https://jeunenation.wordpress.com/2015/12/19/entretien-exclusif-de-nation-avec-un-ex-volontaire-de-la-republique-populaire-de-donetsk/>.

176 Mathieu Molard and Paul Gogo, "Ukraine: Les Docs qui Montrent l'Implication de l'Extrême Droite Française dans la Guerre," *Streetpress*, August 29, 2016, <https://www.streetpress.com/sujet/1472465929-donetskleaks-implication-extreme-droite-francaise-ukraine>.

177 "La Délégation des Brigandes au Donbass (Octobre 2016)," *Clan des Brigandes (blog)*, March 23, 2017, <http://le-clan-des-brigandes.fr/2017/03/23/la-delegation-des-brigandes-au-donbass-octobre-2016/>.

Ukrainian side. For instance, an email on January 18, 2016 relayed the tweet of a man who had supposedly formerly been part of the Azov regiment, in which he joked about the civilian massacres in which he would have taken part.¹⁷⁸ Two months later, the Donbas press agency devoted a French-language article to the man and his message, likening French engagement in the Azov regiment to historical engagement in the Waffen SS.¹⁷⁹ When a Frenchman in the Azov regiment spoke to the French press, by contrast, he emphasized that he was a “left-wing revolutionary” and “libertarian.”¹⁸⁰ The neo-Nazis from the Misanthropic Division who fought on the Ukrainian side have a “Swiss,” but not a “French,” Facebook page. The GUD in Lyon published a statement in support of Azov in August 2014, and, ironically, covered the “anti-fascist” propaganda from the Russian side.¹⁸¹ They subsequently took part in the *Reconquista* network’s “Paneuropa” conference in Kyiv in April 2017.¹⁸² Members of the GUD have since launched the *Bastion Social*, an up-and-coming movement that also incorporates members of *Edelweiss-Savoie* (founded in 2013 after the dissolution of the *Jeunesses Nationalistes*), something which should not immediately influence their geopolitical approach. Lastly, it is worth noting that the *Ligue de Défense Juive*, a far-right activist Zionist movement founded in 2000, puts the Ukrainian government in the same category as Svoboda and promotes the idea of Vladimir Putin as a defender of the Jews and of Israel.¹⁸³

The leaked documents showed that the Republic of Donetsk was trying to organize its lobbying only on the flanks of the European radical far right. The weekly spreadsheets listing the foreign journalists who were *persona grata* or *non grata* on the territory were less indicative of the bias in the newspaper’s ideological line than were the articles: for instance, they contain contradictory assessments of several journalists from *Le Figaro*, the major conservative French daily. However, it appears that journalists’ ideological sensibilities are judged based on how they relate to the idea of an open society: a journalist from *Le Monde* is for instance struck through in red for an article not on Donbas, but on how French public opinion rejects migrants. Yet this *grata/non grata* status is not immutable, since the same journalist was a special correspondent reporting from Donbas in 2017.

On their side, some French far-right movements are engaged in lobbying for Donbas. Emmanuel Leroy chairs for instance the association *Urgence Enfants du Donbass* (initially called

178 We have archives of the leak.

179 “Un Français du Regiment Asov, Démasqué et Convaincu de Crimes de Guerre,” *DNI Press*, March 20, 2016, <https://dnipress.com/fr/posts/un-francais-du-regiment-azov-demasque-et-convaincu-de-crimes-de-guerre/>.

180 Camille Magnard, “Un Français Parti Combattre les Pro-Russes en Ukraine Témoigne,” France TV, August 11, 2014, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/europe/un-francais-parti-combattre-les-pro-russes-en-ukraine-temoigne_1696231.html.

181 gud-lyon.hautetfort.com/ (site now deleted)

182 “Première Conférence Paneuropa Organisée par le Réseau Reconquista à Kyiv (28 Avril 2017),” *Reconquista Europe (blog)*, September 18, 2017, <http://reconquista-europe.tumblr.com/post/165482380356/premiere-conference-paneuropa-organisee-par-le>.

183 “Poutine, l’Ukraine et les Juifs, Sans Langue de Bois,” *Ligue Défensive Juive*, June 12, 2014, <http://www.liguedefensejuive.com/poutine-lukraine-et-les-juifs-sans-langue-de-bois-2014-06-12.html>.

Urgence Enfants d'Ukraine), which claims to have conducted five humanitarian missions in the secessionist region between May 2015 and August 2017.¹⁸⁴ Although the Russian press has noted the work of this association, its activities appear to reach France only via the far-right media (*Synthèse Nationale*, *Rivarol* and *TV Libertés*).¹⁸⁵ As a result of this activity, Emmanuel Leroy was received by the Donbas “Minister of Foreign Affairs” on December 3, 2015.¹⁸⁶ The following month, an FN delegation made a four-day visit to the area, with a program focusing on the question of Ukrainian war crimes, designed to provide the maximum possible media material over the four days.¹⁸⁷ However, Gilbert Collard, a very mediatic NF deputy, did not, in the end, join the trip. As *Streetpress* reported, the participants certainly comprised a densely interlinked mesh of FN supporters and sovereignists, underlining the commitment of the French Russophile community, but no leading figures were involved. This major excursion ended up with just three people: Philippe Migault, a researcher and *Le Figaro* journalist; Xavier Moreau, a businessman close to Marine Le Pen; and Nikola Mirkovic, close to the *Bloc Identitaire*. They did, however, meet Emmanuel Leroy while there and together outlined a union of rights.¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

A Russophile positioning affects almost all organizations on the French far right and all its currents of thought, from Islamophobia to anti-Semitism. This dynamic demonstrates, above all, the desire to recast the old world order into a new one that would be less unipolar, in which nations would have more sovereignty, societies will be less multi-cultural and post-modern, and the economy would be less at the mercy of market caprices. Far-right thinkers reject the transnationalization of the world; they would substitute the transnationalization of politics. During the period between the fall of the Axis powers and the war in the former Yugoslavia, European far-right movements regrouped within the framework of the trans-Atlantic space.¹⁸⁹ Now, their hopes are focused on a horizon that has shifted towards Moscow. Although Marine Le Pen has never quoted Aleksandr Dugin, there is no doubt that the practices of the French institutions she would like to establish correspond to those of an illiberal democracy. The current polarization is thus not simply an outcome of current circumstances but reflects deeper, more structural transformations of the

184 “Mission d’Août 2017,” *Urgence Enfants*, September 10, 2017, <https://urgence-enfants-donbass.fr/2386/mission-daout-2017/>.

185 “USA: Opération au Sol en Cours,” Jean-Marie Lebrand, December 15, 2015, http://nabk4.rssing.com/channel-3747066/all_p205.html.

186 Email from the leak, December 2, 2015.

187 Email from the leak with the detailed program as an attachment, January 8, 2016.

188 Molard and Gogo, “Ukraine: Les Docs qui Montrent.”

189 See the series of works “Internationalisation des Droites Radicales Europe-Amériques” coordinated by Olivier Dard and published by Peter Lang.

European political landscape.